

**PAUL A. LEONARD:
TALES OF NORTHERN NEVADA—AND OTHER LIES;
AS RECALLED BY NATIVE SON,
JOURNALIST AND CIVIC LEADER**

Interviewee: Paul A. Leonard

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Description

Paul A. Leonard was born in Fallon, Nevada, in 1911. The family moved to Reno in 1919, and Mr. Leonard received most of his education there in the public schools and at the University of Nevada. After graduating from the university in 1936, he entered his chosen profession in Elko County as a reporter and editor of the Elko Daily Free Press. For most of the following thirty-six years, Mr. Leonard was actively engaged in journalism in northern Nevada—first, in Elko with the Free Press; in Ely with the Ely Daily Times; and, finally, in Reno with the Reno Evening Gazette and the Nevada State Journal. Throughout his career, he was an observer of the Nevada scene. His comments on the society and economy of northern Nevada, state and local politics and politicians, his fellow journalists, labor relations, the gaming industry, and the newspaper business will be valuable to researchers in several fields.

Only twice during these years did Mr. Leonard leave the field of journalism for a significant period of time. During World War II he served in the Signal Corps of the United States Army; and from 1950 until 1954, he was employed as manager of the Stockmen's Hotel in Elko, an experience which provided him with an insider's view of the gaming industry.

In 1957, Paul Leonard assumed the editorship of the Nevada State Journal, a position he then held until his retirement in 1972. His account of these years includes information on the important news stories that surfaced during the period; remarks on the staff and operation of the newspaper; and perhaps most important, his philosophical observations on the role of a newspaper and its editor.

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An Oral History Conducted by Mary Ellen Glass

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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CONTENTS

Preface to the Digital Edition	ix
Introduction	xi
1. Family History	1
2. My Reno Education	11
Work! (Some Early Careers)	
Education (Elementary and Secondary Schools)	
University Years	
3. The Start of My Newspaper Career	27
The <i>Elko Daily Free Press</i>	
Big News in Elko County, Nevada	
News Sources in Elko (and My M.O.)	
Celebrities Come to the Commercial Hotel	
Production of the EDFP (<i>Elko Daily Free Press</i>)	
Other Writers; Other Papers	
Life in Elko, Nevada	
4. The Journalist Goes to War	59
Work on the <i>Reno Evening Gazette</i> in 1942	
The Wartime Climate	
You're in the Army Now	

5. <i>The Ely Daily Times</i> and Me	73
Important Stories: Hay and Oil	
White Pine County Copper Industry	
Labor and Management	
The Newspaper	
Citizens of Ely	
Education	
Other Writers; Other Papers (Part II)	
6. An Engagement at the Stockmen's Hotel, Elko, Nevada	99
Bears	
7. Business Manager at the Elko Clinic	113
8. Understudy on the <i>Reno Evening Gazette</i>	117
The Great Presence	
The McCarran Machine	
The Behind-the-Scenes Fellows	
The Flood	
9. The Pinnacle of My Career; Work with the <i>Nevada State Journal</i>	131
Interstate Highway	
The Newsroom and Staff of the <i>Nevada State Journal</i>	
Politics and the Newspaper	
The Bud Baker Administration	
The Reno Convention Center Quarrel	
The Editorship	
10. Conclusion	157
Original Index: For Reference Only	163

PREFACE TO THE DIGITAL EDITION

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/>.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber
Director, UNOHP
July 2012

INTRODUCTION

Paul A. Leonard is a native of Nevada, born in Fallon in 1911. The family moved to Reno in 1919, and Mr. Leonard received most of his education there, in the public schools and at the University of Nevada. After graduating from the University in 1936, he entered his chosen profession in Elko County as a reporter and editor for the *Elko Daily Free Press*. For most of the following thirty-six years, Mr. Leonard was actively engaged in journalism in northern Nevada—first, in Elko with the *Free Press*; in Ely with the *Ely Daily Times*; and finally, in Reno with the *Reno Evening Gazette* and later, the *Nevada State Journal*. Throughout his career, he was an observer of the Nevada scene. His comments on the society and economy of northern Nevada; state and local politics and politicians; his fellow journalists; labor relations; the gaming industry; and the newspaper business will be valuable to researchers in several fields.

Only twice during these years did Mr. Leonard leave the field of journalism for a significant period of time. During World War

II he served in the Signal Corps of the United States Army; and for four years (from 1950 until 1954), he was employed as manager of the Stockmen's Hotel in Elko, an experience which provided him with an insider's view of the gaming industry.

In 1957, Paul Leonard assumed the editorship of the prestigious *Nevada State Journal*, a position he then held until his retirement in 1972. His account of these years includes information on the important news stories that surfaced during the period; remarks on the staff and operation of the newspaper; and perhaps most important, his philosophical observations on the role of a newspaper and its editor.

Paul Leonard was an enthusiastic chronicler of his life history through fourteen taping sessions, all at his home in Reno, between November, 1975, and March, 1976. Mr. Leonard's review of his memoir resulted in only a few changes for clarification, but no substantial alterations of language. The memoir includes accounts of newspaper work as reporter, manager, and editor; character

sketches and anecdotes of numerous people; sketches of family members; and a brief conclusion.

The Oral History Project of the University of Nevada, Reno, Library preserves the past and present for future research by tape recording the memoirs of people who have been important to the development of Nevada and the West. Scripts resulting from the interviews are deposited in the special collections departments of the University libraries at Reno and Las Vegas, Paul Leonard has generously donated his literary rights in his oral history to the University of Nevada, Reno, and has designated the volume as open for research.

Kathryn M. Totton
University of Nevada-Reno
1980

FAMILY HISTORY

My name is Paul Leonard, Paul Alfred Leonard. I was born in Fallon, Nevada, or near Fallon, on a farm, April 23, 1911. My father was born in Reno, or actually in the site of Idlewild Park—where Idlewild Park now *is*—in 1867. His name was Leslie Levi Leonard; where the Levi came from I do not know. And I recall my father saying, incidentally, that when he took me out there as a youngster, when Idlewild was first developed, they had some monkeys in a cage, and he used to say, “That’s where I was born, right where the monkey cage is [laughs].” He had quite a sense of humor really in those days, and was really a great guy, and a tough character. His father, I think, was a—the family story says—was a veteran of the Civil War—either that or he was dodging the draft, as it were [laughing], and arrived in Reno. Why he came here, I do not know either, but he arrived in Reno in about 1864 or five. And one point I always thought interesting, he was a millwright, a specialist in making wood moldings to go around the base of floors and so on and so forth; and he worked on Bowers’ Mansion doing this,

either when they were constructing Bowers’ Mansion originally or when it was redone by Eilley Orrum just a short time after. At least he worked on the mansion.

My father, I would guess, lived in Reno until he was about the age of ten—somewhere in there—eight, nine, ten. And I remember him recalling that as a youngster of about that age, he was downtown in Reno (which was just village then, of course, but a pretty rough one), and he and a friend, I think, were walking down Commercial Row in the vicinity of Becker’s, which of course, was part pf the site where the Fitzgerald Hotel is now going up—or has gone up. Becker’s was a (I guess it was Becker’s then)—it was an old, old saloon in Reno anyway. And my father and this other youngster saw a fight up in the street in front of Becker’s, and two men fighting, and one was a big man and the other one was small, and they were both pretty well inebriated, I guess. And the big man struck the little man and knocked him down, of course, there was a little crowd gathered, and my father, I suppose, and his chum were

openmouthed watching this activity. And the little man scrambled on all fours (my father said he could remember this so plainly), and got away from the big man, who went around swaggering. And this little man finally got up and ran and went around the corner. And while the big man was talking, I guess, about going back in and having another drink or somethin', the little man returned. My father recalls that he had a pistol in his hand and it looked, to my Dad [chuckles] at the age of eight or nine or ten, or whatever it was, that the pistol was about two feet long. And the little man said, "This'll make us about even!"—and bang, bang, bang! He shot the big man dead, right in the street. This, of course, caused my father and the other boy to wait around a little longer to see what would happen, and finally, he said, a dray drove up, and they loaded the dead man on the dray and hauled him off, and that was the end of the story, as far as my father was concerned. Nothing was ever said one way or another; he didn't know, at least, whether the little man was prosecuted or even arrested as far as he knew. But that was kind of a little [laughing] anecdote, I guess, that typifies Reno in—what would that be?—1875 or eighty, somewhere in there.

At about that age, though, my father moved to the state of Maine, where he had relatives, and he grew from a youngster into adolescence, and even, I guess, perhaps up to about sixteen or seventeen years old, when the pioneering spirit got the better of him, and he migrated to the state of Washington. There, near what would probably be *in* what is now almost the city of Tacoma, but then out in the wilderness, he hewed a home out of the wilderness and married there to Sarah Gano—believe her name was [laughs]—And there's an area of Tacoma, I believe, called Leonard's Crossing, now, which I'm sure was

named after my father. However, I'm not at all positive. I mean, I say, I'm sure [laughs], but it's only something, of course, that I've heard.

And then my father and his wife divided the blankets, and my father came back down to Reno, and there was a divorce.

From the Pacific Northwest union of my father's first wife, I had three half-brothers; one, Guy L. Leonard (after whom our son was named), and Herbert Leonard and Manch Leonard (the Manch coming from Manchester). Presumably in the family history it was—always claimed—whether or not there's any truth in it, I don't know—that he was named after a Manchester in England who was quite a famous person I guess—held an earldom, or something like that.

Guy Leonard remained in the Northwest all of his life and held very responsible jobs in the railroad, for the Union Pacific and then he was a representative for the railroad business in the Pacific Northwest. I've forgotten his title, and what the name of the organization was, but it was an association of railroad business people up there.

Herbert Leonard, the youngest (Manch was the eldest, Guy in the middle)—Herbert, the third of these three half-brothers, became a projectionist—motion picture projectionist—and spent his life in that work, and died not too many years ago.

Manch Leonard, the eldest of the three half-brothers, went into the lumber business, and was an expert in the grinding of knives and so on, and the making of moldings, and was known in the lumber business throughout the West, as foreman of the big molding mill at Verdi. He, obviously, did come down here at one time. His wife, Daisy, is still alive and living in Auburn. They had three children, one of whom was Lloyd Leonard who is now one of the editors on the *Sacramento Bee* on the state desk.* "Superior California News," the

Bee calls that section. His mother, as I guess I just said, is still alive and very active, even yet, and lives in Auburn. She must be over ninety by now.

When he arrived in Reno, he went into the business of basement digging and that sort of thing, and hauling, pushing dirt around, as it were—I don't know what you'd call that now [laugh] but, of course, using Fresno scrapers and horses. One job which he has told me about, he dug the basement for the J. R. Bradley Company, corner of North Virginia and Plaza; hiring at the time a young man who was going to the University, and who later went on to law school, by the name of William Kearney. Bill Kearney was, for many years, quite a prominent attorney and whenever my Dad needed legal assistance in the future, he went to Bill Kearney. It didn't amount to much, and Bill Kearney obviously thought it didn't either, because he never sent my father a bill [laughing], perhaps remembering that my Dad had given him a job while he was digging a basement for Bradley's. I suppose I should mention just, that Bradley Company was at the corner of Plaza Street, Plaza and Virginia—northwest corner. It's still in operation, and I guess the Bradley Company is probably *the* oldest and certainly one of the two or three oldest businesses in Reno that has continued, and is still in operation out on East Fourth Street.

At the same time, he had a farm on West Seventh Street, just in the back of where Raley's supermarket is now located, and across the road (it was then) from the old dough home. (That was Grace Clough. That was a landmark—the Clough home—for many, many years after my father left, gone to Fallon, and in fact, even after we'd come back to Reno again. I forget about Grace, but she's a, or was an aunt, or something of that, to Russell McDonald, who is now county manager of Washoe County.)*

My father was very interested during his stay in Washington—he got into the racehorse business; that is, not the business, but he acquired a racehorse or two, and these were not gallopers, but trotters and pacers. And at one time he was the trainer for a horse named Chahalis, which held for a time, the world's record for, I think, two miles—something like that. He also did own a galloper or two, I guess, in his time, and one in particular; when he moved to Reno he brought that horse with him. He was a young horse at the time, I guess—when he moved back to Reno.

I better go back. My father was doing some sort of digging work way out on South Virginia (which is probably now well within the city of Reno), and he got thirsty, and he went to this small house to ask for a drink of water. And my mother gave him a drink of water, and from that developed the romance, and they were married.

And my mother was born in Roseville in 1886. And her stepfather worked for the railroad, I believe, or something; and that resulted in his coming in, and my mother's mother coming over here to Reno. My mother was born Rachel Moore. The name Moore—. Her father, that goes back to antiquity, I presume [laughs], in Roseville, and I just can't remember where the Moore came from, in any event.

Well, anyway with the opening of the Newlands Reclamation Project, my father became very interested in that, and could see that—being a farmer—by nature, anyway, I think, and a pioneer-spirit type, decided that he and my mother would move to Fallon. So, my father and mother then moved to Fallon. And I recall their saying that they went to

*Now retired (1978)

**Since retired (1978)

Fallon in the latter— they got there about the end of June, I believe. And it snowed in Fallon on the Fourth of July of that year, which sort of made them wonder whether they should've moved to Fallon, I guess. But, that was when they started farming on the Old River—in the old river area known as Old River. That was where, as I started out saying, I was born in 1911.

I had an older, full brother, by the name of Waldo Leonard, who was born in 1908. Waldo lived in southern California and in Reno for many years. And he, while attending Reno High School, was one of the great basketball players in the history of the school, being on the All-State team three years in a row.

Playing with him on this team were two—several, but two particularly—two or three people who were very well-known athletes and who became well known in the state of Nevada, afterwards. Particularly, one of them, was Denton Hays, who was an official in the Highway Department or started with the Highway Department and became an official; was the field man for the Highway Department in Tonopah—as resident engineer in Tonopah for a good many years. And was also, at one time, in Ely, and we knew him at the time that I was on the *Times* in Ely. But he returned here [Reno] and then retired and is now retired in Reno and playing golf. Another was Roy Salisbury, familiarly known as “Coke,” and he was a very noted Reno High School athlete also. Roy Salisbury died several years ago now. Another member of the team was Camile Meri, who lives, I believe, somewhere in California and regularly comes back here to attend Masonic functions and that sort of thing—although I've never met him, since I was a youngster.

My brother, incidentally, was about three and a half years older than I, and he graduated

from Reno High School, went down to Los Angeles, came back to Reno and worked in the lumber mills and then was a custodian for Echo Loder School until his retirement' from the school system. And as I said, he became ill. We were never, in the latter days, particularly closely associated—maybe just see each other just once a year. [The first time he was] sick in his life—a friend of his, the family's called me and said he was. We took him to the hospital, and I think he had emphysema compounded by other things, and he died in Washoe Medical in June, 1976.

My older brother being, oh, three, three and a half years older than I, of course, started to school first at the Old River school, a little old, white typical school house, located just on down the ditch, Newlands Project ditch. It was quite a long ways; I suppose maybe a quarter of a mile [laughs], half a mile, or something like that. It was a little bit beyond walking distance—if you didn't have to walk, and we didn't, because my father provided my brother with a horse to start to school. And so I started to school rather early, about four or five years old, I guess. And my brother'd just boost me up on the horse in the back of him, and take me to school. No one ever protested that I was too young, in those days. So I've often recollected that if I started to school when I was five, I went to school for twenty years [laughs], which took a long time. (Indicative of my intelligence, I guess, I had to go to school twenty years to get out.)

In any event, we attended Old River school for a short time—not too long—when they consolidated the school districts in Fallon. And, I've been reminded—they talk about busing children, and it's become one of the nationwide controversies, and so on and so forth—but they bused children in about 1916 or '17, or '18, along in there, because the schools were consolidated. We went to what

was called West End in Fallon. We were picked up in a chain drive bus, up and down the Old River area, and taken in there to school. I think I was in the second grade then.

I was born left-handed, and still do many things left-handed, not ambidextrously. I can't do one or the other. I either have to do one or the other, that is if I—. For instance, I bat a baseball and throw with my left hand (or did when I batted one). And [laughs] bowl, for instance, with my right hand, and so on. But I really was born left-handed, and mainly because I wrote left-handed. I do not recall the teacher's name when I went to West End. But, in those days, southpaw was considered sort of, oh, almost [laughs], I wouldn't say a cripple, but certainly no one should write left-handed; so the teacher would come along and yank the pencil out of my hand, and put it in my right hand. And then I'd try to write that way, and of course, at that age, it wasn't very long until I was writing right-handed. That's my main recollection [laughs] I believe, of the time I spent in West End school, was being forced to write right-handed, which turned out to be excellent, because the world is built for right-handed people, as it's often said. And I think very truly.

School at Old River is beyond my memory almost. I just remember riding there, and perhaps recess, as a little kid would. West End, of course, was, by the measure of those days, considerably improved, because it was much larger, and very scary. There, all I remember basically, is gettin' in fights. I don't [laughs] remember. You know the farm kids and the kids from the big city of Fallon sort of didn't commingle too well, and we used to get in scraps, never think anything about it, but—.

Of course, I think, when I was in about third grade (must've been the third grade; undoubtedly I was held back, because I'd started when I was four or five), I think it

was about the time of the third grade, that my father inherited his mother's property on West Third Street in Reno. And after—in nine years, or whatever the period would be from '06 to 1919, he decided we'd move back to Reno, and take up the old home on West Third Street, 409 West Third Street it was. And that's what we did. And we arrived, the family (that is, my brother and I, and my father and mother), arrived back in Reno—or my father arrived “back”—we, for the first time, naturally, in February of 1919.

My father was a cantaloupe raiser—that is, shortly after going to Fallon, or not too many years after (I think) he and my mother moved from Reno to Fallon in 1906, incident to the opening of the Newlands Project), a few years after that and I'm not sure how many, he began to raise cantaloupes. My recollection is that they were not what was later the “Hearts of Gold,” but were a hybrid called the “Ford Hook.” The “Ford” comes from Rocky Ford, and the “Hook” from an agriculturist, who had also developed cantaloupe seed. The cantaloupes were very good, and proved very successful. My father and a man by the name of Ralph Vannoy (whose son later became sheriff of Churchill County), started the Fallon cantaloupe business. It grew, for those days, into a pretty highly productive pursuit. And they were soon shipping cantaloupes to the Wood-Curtis Company located on Third Street in Reno, just west of Sierra Street, around the corner from the Coffin and Larcombe grocery store. Cantaloupes, in fact, became so highly regarded in the East that they shipped to the East on as fast a freight, I guess, as you could get in those days. And I believe they say that the cantaloupes brought—a half a cantaloupe cost a dollar in the East, and on today's market, of course, that would mean a half a cantaloupe for about five or more dollars— wouldn't you say? And, so

my father did fairly well on this cantaloupe farm.

While he was doing that, though, he always had a yen to find a mine that would put us on “Easy Street,” as many an old Nevadan has tried to do, and a few have done it. He used to go prospecting and so on, and also—knowing horses and teams—he drove a six or eight horse freight team to the old mining camps of Fairview and Wonder, east of Fallon, thirty miles—thirty, forty miles, something like that, I guess. My father was really an old prospector in the true sense of the word, lacking only the burro business, I guess. I recall many years later after we had moved to Reno he still had this hankering to cover all the territory he could and find another Comstock lode, etc. And he had developed a great ability, almost like a geologist or mining engineer, I guess, to be able to tell where ore came from and that sort of thing, from wandering over the years in the mountains and the deserts of Nevada. Maybe sometimes just by sheer virtue of guessing, he could look at a piece of ore and tell the general area where it came from, even as good, maybe even better than a geologist, sometimes [laughing], who had to do it scientifically.

And, one day he was driving; it was cold weather and the horses were plodding along, and he was pretty chilled, so he jumped out of the wagon and walked to warm himself up and beat his hands and began throwing rocks around and one thing and another just to keep himself going. He hefted one of the rocks, and looked at it, and thought, “It looks like a pretty good piece of ore.” So he looked at it and tossed it in the jockey box; went on into Fairview or Wonder, whichever town he was taking the freight to at that time. And when he got back to the farm in Fallon, he panned the ore, and he had a string of silver about an inch and a half long in the back of it, and of

course (figuratively speaking, at least), I guess, he threw the pan up in the air [laughing]—it was a strike.

He got on a horse or a fast team and scurried back out the twenty-five, thirty miles, wherever he found this ore was in the range of hills beyond Salt Wells—Sand Springs—and staked out his claim. He then went into Fallon and had the assay made, and it ran very heavy in silver. And in those days, of course, the word would always get around, the assayer usually being the talkative type [laughs], and the first thing you know there was a string of wagons headed out toward Sand Springs, and there was in effect, a slight “rush.” No one ever has heard of it, since it would be considerably overpowered by such places as Goldfield, Tonopah and, of course, the Comstock and so on, but there was a little rush, but nothing much ever really came of it, except that my father, of course, had staked out the prime claims, knowing quite a little bit about prospecting. And he called these mines—called the mine, the Dan Tucker, the family version being (and I guess perhaps my Dad said this himself) that he began to hum and sing when he went up there and staked out these claims; and there was a song, “Old Dan Tucker was a Merry Old Man,” et cetera. So that’s what he named the mine. Eventually, he lost control of that mine, but still retained another one just below it. (What was the name of that mine?)

In any event, I went out after I—I guess as late as after I’d moved to Reno, which wasn’t too late, 1919—after *we* had moved back to Reno—and drove a truck hauling ore from the mine down the hill on the road toward Fallon where a small ball mill (I think it was a ball—yes, it was a ball mill) had been constructed, and so we did produce a little ore in there. In the meantime, the Dan Tucker was—well, my father would lease it out and then take it

back and the first thing you know, he lost the mine entirely, and it was eventually taken over by a big Canadian company which produced a considerable amount of ore at one time. Some years later, a relative of mine named Ray Staley, who for a time was surveyor general, I believe, told me, actually, the total takeout of the Dan Tucker mine approached about two million dollars, which wasn't any tremendous sum [laughing], but proved that it was a successful mine, and my father always maintained if you went down further and you could get the financing, why, it was really—the Dan Tucker would prove to be another bonanza. Nothing ever happened though, and my brother and I were not concerned with mining; we didn't do the assessment work on the claims below the Dan Tucker and so, someone jumped it, I suppose, and that's the last we ever heard of it. I guess it was a wise move, that is, no move at all on our part, since it never seemed to produce anything.

While this was going on, my father ran into some sort of an argument with two very prominent Nevada men—so the story goes and I cannot now verify it, except that I remember my father saying he was in his old Model-T Ford on its way out, after he had had an argument with these two men, who to the best of my recollection were Noble Getchell and True Vencill, Sr. They edged my father's car off the road with their car and they got out to have a discussion with him over whatever the trouble was. And my father was afraid that they were going to take him to pieces. So, as he got out of his little Model T, he took the jack handle with him; and there actually, apparently, was no violence when he displayed the jack handle. They had a few hot words while each got in his car and took off. [Laughs] That was about the only incident.

I have noted that he had driven an eight-horse freight team from Fallon to Fairview

and Wonder. One anecdote I remember which, I guess, was typical of freight team drivers in those days, was that as he was going along over the Nevada desert with his team, he'd on occasion make a small peg—whittle a small peg—and then at the appropriate moment he would take a hammer and I guess something that would be—approach a screwdriver, and drive the barrel hoop down just perhaps three-quarters of an inch or so; then he would drill a small hole in the barrel of whiskey (which there was plenty being hauled out to Fairview and Wonder in those days), and produce a bottle (which he usually took along) and fill the bottle with the whiskey. He'd drill the hole and when the whiskey shot out, he would hold the bottle there—fill the bottle up. Then he would get his little peg out and drive it quickly back in, with a hammer or something and then would nudge the barrel hoop back up over the hole. Then he would take the whiskey (at an appropriate time, also) and hide it off to the side of the road. I remember him telling me once, "Ya know, kid, on my way back to Fallon, I never missed the *Sagebrush* where I had hidden that whiskey." And, of course, one quart of whiskey [laughing] was never missed from a big barrel, when he got to the bar or saloon at Fairview.

Might intersperse at that time, that from time to time, my father had to come to Reno during the time that he was farming on the Old River. And he had raised racehorses in Washington; and particularly pacers and trotters—not much to do with gallopers. And, he brought a couple of those horses down with him to Reno, and then eventually to Fallon and so on. And in Fallon, on some big holiday I recall, my father brought one of his horses—was called Grey Barney, who was a, in this case, was a galloper, a quarter horse. And Fallon had the big celebration, and Lem Allen, who was one of

the leading residents of Fallon (and his family for that matter was) had a very fine horse. And my father, probably in conversation, had told people what a great quarter horse Grey Barney was; so came to pass that a challenge grew up. And on this holiday, they had a race down Fallon's Maine Street between Grey Barney and Lem Allen's horse, whose name, of course, I [laughs] do not remember. I wouldn't know if I heard. But, in any event, my father had been plowing with Barney, and he took the horse off of the plow, and rode him into town, and then beat Lem Allen's horse. [Laughs] All of which leads me up to what I was gonna say about time, and transportation. I remember that my father put one of his best horses on a rig, and he had to come to Reno, once, and drove to Reno in one day—which was very, very good time.

So, anyway, dropping the cantaloupe business, which of course, went on for many years after, in Fallon, but eventually seemed to peter out, almost like a mine. Something, people always said, went out of the soil, and I believe even the University agreed that that seemed to be the case—that is, the extension people or whoever, at the University. In any event, the cantaloupes went from the Ford—from the species that my father and Mr. Vannoy started with, into the Heart of Gold, which became almost nationally famous actually. But in the meantime, my father gave up the cantaloupe business, and moved back to Reno, see.

I was still living in Fallon, of course, [with] my parents during World War I. And the latter part of it, we had a Model-T Ford (vintage of 1914, I believe) in 1918. So, my father decided that he, having lived at one time and built a farm and so on in the northwest, and still having relatives there; why, we'd take a trip. So, we packed everything up except the dog, and I guess it would have been sometime in October (I suppose), left for Tacoma, Washington. I recollect that it took eight days to drive from

Fallon to Tacoma, Washington. And of course, at one point, the car was pulled out of the mire, and lost the brakes, and it almost fell over a cliff at Myrtle Creek and oh, [laughs] it was almost like covered wagon days, coming across the plains, as you look back on it now. Of course, then I didn't think too much about it. Once in awhile you'd hit a strip of pavement for a mile or two, and it was really, it was quite, oh boy, you just flew then. That Ford would go thirty miles an hour. In any event, when we got—it must've been the latter part of October, because we were in Tacoma on the, I believe, eighth or ninth of November, something like that—when the rumor swept that the war was over. World War I had ended. And, there was great cheering, and parades, and everything in Tacoma, which I remember vaguely. And, then, of course, it turned out that it was a false armistice, that war actually was not over, and did not end for another two or three days, or whatever it was, November 11, Armistice Day. So I was not in Reno at that time, nor Nevada, for that matter. But, we were there for both the false armistice and the true armistice, I think, and then went on back to the farm. But, one of the things that one can remember fifty-seven or eight years ago, whatever it might've been, was the hullabaloo over the end of World War I. And Tacoma just went crazy with the armistice. This false armistice apparently—it's hard for me to remember—but I think it was pretty widely celebrated, as it were, before they calmed people down and said the surrender had not been signed, or whatever was necessary.

* * * * *

My father, incidentally was still interested in the mines of course, and in about 1940, after I had moved to Elko, he was on route from, I guess Reno, out to do the assessment work

or do something on these claims that he had gotten—oh, the Black Joe they were called—the Black Joe. There was the Dan Tucker and the Black Joe. He went out to do some work on the claims, and was on his way home in about the present vicinity of the Naval Air Station, where the old road went at that time (which was, of course, before Highway 50 went further to the north), and two drunken Indians in a big truck crossed the highway and smashed into his Ford, and my father was taken to the hospital in Fallon and I was called in Elko and I drove there, but he died just within the hour, I guess, of the time that I got back to Fallon. My mother died within months after that time in Washoe Medical Center, or Washoe County Hospital; I believe this was 1940. Our little property on 409 West Third Street was willed to my brother and me, and we sold it and split the money, of course, according to the settlement, I guess, which probably Mr. Kearney did at the time. I went back to Elko, I guess, and went back to work for the paper, of course. Guess that all comes full circle, doesn't it? [Laughing]

MY RENO EDUCATION

WORK! (SOME EARLY CAREERS)

So, on returning to Reno, or on my coming to Reno with my parents, the big city sort of made me nervous, but in a little while, as a youngster of eight or nine years old, I guess, I soon became used to it. And my father, wanting to be certain that there were no idle hands, suggested to me that I go down and sell newspapers. So he took me down the first day, down to the old *Gazette* Building which is now, of course, the site, the rear of which is the First National Bank parking lot, and went in the door and got me signed up to take out ten papers—*Gazettes*—*Reno Evening Gazettes*. That was the afternoon paper of course. So I started in the newspaper business [laughing], quite early. That, I guess you'd call a circulation department [laughs]. Anyway, [laughs] I sold newspapers for, oh, several years actually. I guess it would have been 1920 or something like that when I started, or '21, and I sold newspapers quite a number of years; and then delivered a route.

At that time the back of the *Gazette*, in the back of the *Reno Evening Gazette*, there was a kind of an empty old lot, that is, the building only went halfway through, from Center Street back toward Lincoln Alley. And we used to have some great times back there while we were waiting for the papers to come out. Oh, some of the finest fights you ever saw in Reno, and so on. I remember once I was knocked completely out with a core—a core of one of the rolls of paper; they're heavy cardboard—bounced off my head. And so we got quite a little training in how the world works, in the back of the *Gazette*, waiting for the call for papers.

I've forgotten now whether I sold all of those ten papers that my father bought for me—bought them for two and a half cents and I'd sell them for a nickel. But, eventually, I built up until I was taking eighteen papers. I remember I was always afraid to jump to twenty, because that seemed like so many more, although, I always sold my eighteen. In fact, over so many months, I took only

eighteen papers, that the other kids used to call me “Paul Eighteen.” [Laughs] So, anyway, I built that up to quite a few.

And then, at that time, the *Gazette* had a system for its newsboys, in which there were about six “corners” established; and if you took forty papers, you could become a “corner,” provided there was an opening. So, there became an opening, and I became what was known as a “corner.” And which corner was not designated; [they] used the bottle for a pool, little bottle, a leather bottle, and they dropped six beans in it, and every evening, why, they’d shake those beans out, and each one of us who held corners, would look at their bean and say, “Oh, great. I’ve got the Stag Inn,” or “Oh gee, number six, clear down on Lake Street. I’ll never —,” you know. And the whole business of the corners was dependent upon whether or not you sold all your papers—a great many times—of those forty, because forty was quite a bunch of papers to sell in the streets of Reno then. The corner would get about a half an hour to sell first, before any of the other regular kids could sell their papers. And then as the press continued to roll, why then they’d call—they’d come up the back steps in the back of the *Gazette*, and you know, “Papers!” and all the fifteen or whatever (sometimes more I guess) kids that were regular newsboys, would all dash down and buy their papers, take them out. And then you were released from your corner; you didn’t have to stay on it. Previously, while you’re in this half hour interim, you must stay right on the corner. So the kids coming out, and they would run out of Lincoln Alley, and spread out through Second Street, and all over town of course, like a swarm of locusts, to peddle their papers.

And of course, in those days, without any radio or TV, any means of communication except periodicals, magazines and so on, why,

nobody knew what the news was during the day, unless it was so mammoth that word would get around; and if it did, then the papers would put out an “extra,” of course. The extras, being long gone now, because of radio and television. But, if there was a big story, a real big story, you could sell your papers fast. If it was a dull news day, it became very difficult sometimes. So, I developed a system of customers—just as though it was a route. And I had customers of—oh, I was perhaps carrying towards the end (before I became a corner), twenty-four papers or thirty—somewhere in there, I can’t remember—over half of which were permanent customers. And I would deliver them papers, and then collect and so on. Got cheated a few times, too [laughs] but, that was good training. You learn not to *trust* someone too much.

And then eventually, I became a route carrier. And I carried the papers in two different places, on a route: one downtown and one in the silk stocking district over in the southwest, which then encompassed mainly Court Street, Clay Street, from Belmont Road (now Arlington), west, in that general area.

And in those days, too—someone remarked the other day, when we were rolling old papers to put in the fireplace, that they remembered, they said, “Why don’t you roll them up, and just bend them [gesture] like that, after you roll them?”

And I said, “Gosh, that’s the way we used to carry the routes. We’d have a double bag, one on each side, stuffed full of papers.” And when the papers came out, you rolled them up, and you bent them, and then you would, as you came by the houses (of course, you’d ride down past on the sidewalk), if you could aim it just right, you’d put it right on the porch. Once in a while, you’d give it a little too much lead, as you went down, and your paper would go through a window [laughs]. Then

you'd deny you had anything to do with it, I guess. I [laughs] don't remember. I only really remember breaking one window, but I know more than that were broken in those days. But, of course, the papers were much smaller. Like for instance, a big paper for the *Gazette*, then, would be sixteen pages. I don't suppose the *Gazette* has printed as few as sixteen pages for thirty years. I don't know. The route-carrying lasted for quite a little while, but eventually vanished as I got a little older.

I might mention—going back to the selling of the papers—the Stag Inn corner, which was the southwest corner of Virginia and Commercial Row, where Fitzgerald's hotel is now being built; and the Stag Inn was the best corner in Reno. Well, why this was, was apparently that many of the workmen who lived north of town, would come around the Stag Inn. They'd go into the Stag Inn, have a near beer—terrible stuff, but—. [Laughs] And then come out and buy a paper and then head for home, lunch bucket in the hand, as it were. So, it became a very, very lucrative corner, as a place to sell your papers.

One of my present day friends and I first became friends there. And that was [F. E.] Pete Walters, who is a very prominent Reno real estate man. Pete and I would sort of trade off, and sometimes we'd both stand on the corner, and we never did get into any personal difficulties over this. And we've never gotten into any since—fifty-four or five years ago, I guess.

After my experience there, and I was going to Mary S. Doten school at that time. I lived at, still living at 409 West Third, of course. Let's see, I guess my newspaper career of the "early days" [chuckles] took up most of my time while I was at Mary S.

My next job that I recall, I worked for R. O. Churchill, who was a Massachusetts Yankee, who had a small grocery store, very near where

the Stag Inn was (which is also now part of Fitzgerald's hotel, along on Commercial Row). I remember I used to work there nights for him—a couple of hours—especially on Friday night getting ready for the Saturday specials. And he was very competitive, even though he was a small grocer. He had a half of the—Reno Meat Company was in this building, and then R. O. Churchill's rented half of it, and the butcher shop was on the other wall. And the butcher shop, there was Roy Schooley, and Bill Schooley, and Mr. [Elmer L.] Armstrong. (His daughter is real well-known Reno woman, and I can't recall her name right off hand.) But anyway, I worked for Mr. Churchill for a quarter each Friday night, and then worked on all day Saturday. And I guess I mighta gotten fifty cents for working on Saturday—Massachusetts Yankees not being particularly generous with their money [laughs].

But Mr. Churchill was a very, very sharp operator. And of course, he used to deal with various wholesale houses. (I don't know whether this is pertinent or not.) He, I recall, once, as a for instance, how Mr. Churchill really knew how to make a sharp deal; he went down to Levy-Zentner, wholesale of course, down East Fourth Street (I think it was even then—well it isn't any more, it's down in the Power Company's development, Industrial Way), but Levy-Zentner was on East Fourth, and Mr. Churchill went down one morning to see about the greeneries that he wanted to buy—celery, tomatoes, lettuce, et cetera, et cetera, and fruit—and while there, he noticed, in talking with Elwood Luce who was then the youngest manager of any Levy-Zentner branch in the West, I guess. But, Mr. Luce told him that he had this—doggone, he had *all* these cases of peaches, that they'd been left in a refrigerator where the gas escaped or something, and discolored the peaches. So, Mr. Churchill inquired from some expert,

as to whether or not it'd actually harm the peaches themselves, and it was determined it had not. There was nothing poisonous about it. So, anyway, he determined this, and so, he asked Mr. Luce, "What'll you take for them?"

And Mr. Luce said, "Ye gods, Roy, they're not worth anything. People won't buy these peaches with this color, even though there's nothing wrong with them."

"Well," Roy said, "I'll give you so much," which perhaps was a quarter of what he would've gotten for a case of peaches. He had dozens of crates of 'em.

"What do you want them for, Roy? You can't sell all those peaches," Mr. Luce said.

Roy said, "Well, take it or leave it. I'll give it to you anyway."

So Mr. Churchill had Levy-Zentner deliver them to his little grocery store. And then he called the Chism Ice Cream Company, and said, "How would you like to have peach ice cream for your special next Saturday?" or whatever.

"What've you got in mind?"

So he explained the situation, and they came down and looked at the peaches; I guess had a test made to make absolutely sure there was nothing wrong with them—Chism's hardly being one to risk their reputation. So anyway, they bought all the peaches from Roy Churchill, and he turned a very beautiful profit. This was one example of his operation, you know and how he— [chuckles] .

Also, another was, that he taught me. You buy a case of strawberries, and the baskets that used to have a metal top, a ridge along the top, you know? But, he would take a case of strawberries—he showed me how to do this—and I would go out in the back. There was a rear where they had stacked boxes, and so on and so forth, and I guess where the refrigerator was. I would go out there on the table, and I would take one basket of strawberries, empty one

basket of strawberries, and then empty a basket into it, and of course, in dumping one basket of strawberries into another, naturally they weren't packed quite as well, and you'd save three, or four, or five strawberries, and you just kept this routine up, until, from a case of twelve—if it were twelve baskets of strawberries, you'd get thirteen baskets of strawberries to sell [laughs]. So he would make the profit, extra profit. That would be completely clear [laughs]. They knew how to run grocery stores in Massachusetts in those days. Well, of course, he'd been out here for quite some time.

EDUCATION IN RENO (ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS)

Anyway [laughs], I guess at that time I think I was going to old Reno Junior High School. I left Mary S. Doten in the high seventh grade. I left behind (or some who went with me) some very fine teachers, including Miss Prouty, Estelle Prouty. And Miss Powers; who scared me to death, because she was the first big city teacher that I had. And she was a very positive middle-aged woman, probably about thirty [laughs]. You know how they looked, and how you think of 'em. But, Miss Powers [laughs] wasn't—a teacher—I've forgotten. And of course, Echo Loder was the principal of Mary S. Doten at that time.

One of my classmates, that I remember, was in the same grade as I, was Margaret Fuller who later married Ed Muth, who was the Nevada state engineer, or deputy, or whatever. Mr. Muth died a good many years ago, but Margaret Muth, of course, is now regarded as one of the great teachers in Reno's history. Also, as I recall, another classmate was Orison Miller, who was a Reno dentist for many, many years. Calvin Bannigan became quite a high officer in the United States Army. "Kelly" Bannigan; he

was known as Kelly Bannigan. Jack Walther, I believe, was a little ahead of me, perhaps with my brother or something like that, so he wasn't a classmate. But perhaps Jim Scrugham (whose father, of course, became governor and United States Senator of Nevada, and so on). And Jim worked for the Bell Telephone for many years, and retired quite a number of years ago. Still active in hunting, and fishing, and various things like that, I guess, although I hardly ever see Jim.

Anyway, the time I was in the high seventh grade, Reno Junior High was built; later became Northside Junior High. I'm almost sure it was called just Reno Junior High, being the only one in Reno. And then when Billingshurst Junior High was built, Reno Junior High became Northside Junior High. That's my recollection. Northside Junior High, of course, is now a parking lot surrounded by Fourth Street, Center Street, Lake Street and Plaza.

And coming along with me from Mary S. Doten, was Echo Loder [laughs], who's, of course, one of the great teachers in Reno's history, and after [whom] the school is now named, and all that sort of business. But, Echo Loder threw the fear o' God into the hearts of everyone. She kept, in her office, a strap, about an inch and a half wide, and about a foot and a half or two feet long. And anyone who got out of line too badly, went to see Miss Loder, and it depended upon her judgment, as to whether you bent over and got a few raps on the rear. So there was very little lack of discipline in the junior high school. It was run very, very firmly, but well, by Echo Loder.

The other teachers, too, had quite a bit of leeway in how they would handle people. I recall once I was sitting, whispering across the aisle and had my hands on my desk, and the teacher (whose name I do not remember) all of a sudden came up behind me, and wham!

She hit me with a ruler right on my hands. I [laughs] jumped. I watched my whispering [laughs] from that time on.

In junior high school, in which I acquired fairly good grades I guess, nothing startling, of course, because I was pretty much interested in sports, and that sort of thing, or becoming so; and it was there that I first played basketball. And my brother, being a locally famous basketball player, sort of taught me various maneuvers and so on, in basketball. And so I made the junior high team, I guess. Then, when I graduated from junior high and went into the tenth grade, that is into Reno High School, old Reno High—West Street, faced on West—had a *terrible* gymnasium in the bottom, underneath the school, but [laughs] that's where the gymnasium was, so perforce, that's where you played! I managed to make the team. Herb Foster (after whom, you know, Foster Drive is named, where Reno High is now located) was the basketball coach, and a disciplinarian of the first order. And, he, of course, coached me, and at that time just as I went into Reno High School, my brother was a senior. We both played one year on the Reno High School basketball team, along with—oddly enough, I guess—a young man named Leslie Leonard. Same name as my father, but no relation to us, we Leonards. So that I recall at one time we were having a big game down in Sparks. [Laughs] And whenever you played Sparks, it was a big game, because the rivalry was worse then I think, perhaps, than it is now. Couldn't've been any easier. The cheerleaders cheered—there was Les Leonard played one forward; I played the other forward; my brother Waldo was the center, so there were three Leonards out of five on the floor—and they gave cheers for “Leonard, Leonard, Leonard.” [Laughs]

At Reno High, of course, E. Otis Vaughn was the principal. Speaking of discipline, there

was no little of it. E. O. Vaughn—ran Reno High School. I remember one young man, later was a successful business man in Reno, recalled how he popped off at Mr. Vaughn. And Mr. Vaughn took him by the seat of the pants, and the scruff of the neck, and threw him, literally; actually threw him right down the steps of Reno High School. He had no more trouble with him, or for quite a long time [laughs] nobody else around Reno High School. Mr. Vaughn, however, was really a very kindly, a very kindly man. He just had a temper, a German temper I guess.

Perhaps I should go back to Echo Loder on this. Many years after I had left Northside Junior High, and had gone to Elko and was in the newspaper business, I came back to Reno and I was walking up Virginia Street one day, and ran into Echo Loder. Of all the people that she had, she stopped right on the sidewalk, and said, “Why, Paul Leonard.”

And I said, “Gosh, Miss Loder.” And we stood on the street and had a conversation. And after this terrible reputation as a disciplinarian that I remember, I stood and talked to Miss Loder for five or ten minutes and found her the most gracious, most marvelous woman to talk to that you’d ever conceive. And I walked on down the street and thought, “Gee, I wish I’d known her [laughs] when I was in school.” ’cause when Miss Loder came down the hall, if you could, you ducked! You know, because the principal was coming. Just an aside I guess.

But, when I went to Reno High, and beside Mr. Vaughn, there were many very fine teachers, some of whom I avoided particularly if they taught mathematics, because my intellect (if any) was not bent that way. I was trying to think—. Of course, my favorite teacher was Ruth Briggs, now as you probably know, Mrs. Randall Ross. And from her I took English. She was an excellent, excellent teacher. So was Effie Mona Mack, from whom

I took history. And it seems to me—could it be possible that she also—. No, it must have been someone else. I was thinking of geometry. I did struggle through geometry.

Alwine Sielaff. She was there, but I—. She was one of those that I (laughs). She not only had a reputation as being very tough and very firm, but she taught mathematics [laughs]! And so I don’t believe I ever took a course from Miss Sielaff.

Oh, the chemistry teacher was a man who’s now an optometrist. Ed Streng. We later, incidentally—he tried to teach me in chemistry, and I flunked it, and then, years later, things were entirely different. It was a sort of a situation as it was with Miss Loder. Prof Streng as we used to call him, of course) came up to the newspaper office about something or other. And he came in, and we had a very nice conversation. From then on, of course, from time to time I’d run into him. Is he still—? Anyway, he was another one of my teachers, and of course Effie Mack, as time proved, was very good, as a history teacher; and passed me, and so I always had a nice feeling in my heart for her. She was also very, very dedicated, and no nonsense type, that’s for sure.

I don’t know about Reno High. I generally feel that it was really a top part of my life to go to Reno High School. I took ROTC there. I guess everybody did, or you wished you did when you got to college, because then you had to take it in college, and I didn’t have to; so I had enough ROTC in Reno High. My first commander there of two was Captain Overstreet. And then there was Sergeant Skeen. And the next commandant, after Overstreet, was Colonel—. Gosh, can’t remember his name. His son, later, was a banker in Wells, and so on. But anyway, I guess that isn’t particularly vital.

I graduated from Reno High School in 1930, having been captain of the basketball

team. Many of those basketball players—Clayton Phillips, who beat me out for first string, and whom I now refer to as “Foxy Phil;” [laughs] nobody else does.

UNIVERSITY YEARS

But, graduated in June of 1930, and I just didn’t know exactly what I was gonna do when I got out of high school. I thought I would like to go to college, but I didn’t know whether I could raise the money, so on and so forth. So, I did not start university the following year. And a very good friend of mine, by the name of Denver Dickerson (who’s been very active in both newspaper and state government in Nevada for a long—or had been for many, many years, and who eventually became lieutenant governor of Guam, Secretary of Guam, and now is on the staff of a Senate committee in Washington—Denver who was three years to the day, younger than I) came by one day, and he had made it through high school. He was a friend of mine, at the time, of course, and he asked me whether or not I was gonna start school this time. Apparently, this would have been one year later, or one semester. And I said, “Well, I don’t know, Denver. I dunno what to do. The only thing that I could see if I did go to school, would be to teach, and that is, get a teacher’s certificate, and coach and teach in some town around Nevada. Perhaps I could teach history or something.”

Denver said, “You know what I’m going to do?”

And I said, “No. What?”

He said, “I’m going up there and take this journalism.”

And I said, “Oh, like you write things for the paper, or something like that?”

“Yeah,” he said, “I’m gonna do this. It oughta be a real interesting thing.”

And I said, “Well, gee, that is, that does sound rather interesting.”

So I rounded up enough money, I guess, to start to register. Must’ve cost all of twenty-five, thirty dollars to register for a resident of Nevada then, something like that. (Really, I don’t think it was much more than that. I registered once, I remember at mid-semester, at the University of Nevada for eight dollars.) So, anyway, I thought, well, that sounds like it’d be a pretty interesting type thing. So I started to college then; pledged to Sigma Nu. And I was affiliated with Sigma Nu for a long time, and never raised the money to be initiated—. So, although I’m sort of [laughs] considered a Sigma Nu, I’m actually not one because I was never, never got the final degree or whatever.

But anyway, I went up and registered and talked to Professor Higginbotham, and that’s Alfred Leslie Higginbotham. And, of course, he welcomed me into the Journalism Department, which was one room in the old—I believe it had originally opened as a library, and then became the English building. And we had one room with a big, long table, in the Journalism Department. And of course, then there was no department of journalism. Really, you majored in English and emphasized journalism—English major with courses in journalism.

I guess in most of the classes there were a dozen, fifteen, something like that. But, from those classes of the University, over the years, under the many, many years of Prof Higginbotham, who of course was the first journalism professor and was there until, what, ten, twelve years ago? or something like that—a great many very fine newspapermen came out of that, including many who have become locally noted: Ty Cobb, Joe Jackson; John Sanford just started, but then he left the University, and did not complete (did not get a degree).

So, in the fall of '31, I enrolled at the University majoring in English with courses in journalism, under Professor Higginbotham. I went, let's see, I guess through my sophomore year, and ran out of money—this being right in the midst of the Depression and all. So I left the University and went to work in a lumber mill in Klamath Falls. It's good having a half brother who was the foreman of the lumber mill at Klamath Falls, so I got a job there. Forty cents an hour, which was very good—feeding a sticker. That's a machine that makes moldings, such as quarter-round picture frame moldings, all that sort of business; lattice and so on. I had previously worked, as I think I've mentioned before, at the Jesse E. Smith Lumber Company, for Sam Jaksick. So I went to Klamath Falls and worked, and my nephew, Lloyd Leonard (also a newspaper man, now retired from the *Sacramento Bee*—was the son of my half brother), and we both went up and went to work for the Klamath Moulding Company, and spent the next year or so there. I guess about a year, a year and a half perhaps. I guess a year and a half, because eventually we saved an enormous sum of money like eighty or ninety dollars and [laughing] came back to Reno, over the summit, and entered the University again.

It was about that time that I was in journalism, and the *Sagebrush* office, for it was located in the old Historical building, just below the gates. And I was up there one day, and Forrest Bibb, who at that time was the editor of the *Sagebrush*—I was applying sort of for a job as a staff member of the *Sagebrush*, being an embryo newspaper man. And this young woman, and a couple of her friends came by and we had a little chat, and so on and so forth, and I was rather intrigued by her, and her name was Gwenevere Erikson. And so we went together throughout college, more or less, and eventually were married

forty years ago, and then some, a little bit [chuckles].

Well, *Sagebrush*, of course, I was on for practically all the time I was in school, being a journalism student. I had better be in those days. This is not the situation, I guess, now. But then if you—the *Sagebrush* was really an extension and a way for journalism students to get their stuff in print. And not only that, but of course, the *Sagebrush*, naturally, was always looking for reporters and so on. I never was the editor of the *Sagebrush*. I was assistant editor in my senior year, and maybe the assistant editor in my junior year. I can't remember. But, I don't remember specifically what I did. Forrest Bibb was the editor of the *Sagebrush*. (He is now, I think, still active in Yancey's. He left the newspaper business after he served as editor of the *Elko Independent*. He was the editor there during the Luther Jones thing.) But Forrest was a—. Of course, I had known him before, and he just said, "Well, I'll tell you what to do," and gave me an assignment. I think it had to do with the lousy food at the gow house. And that's been a subject of discussion for as long as the University's been in existence [laughs], I guess.

But in any event, I went out over to the gow house, which was then located about where—well, right in back of Manzanita Hall, whatever that would be. It was right along in there somewhere. (It's kind of hard—it's changed so much—to remember just where.) But anyhow, there was quite a to-do over there, and I think, I suppose at the time I interviewed some of the students who very regularly had at least lunch there. And there was some incident in which they'd run out of food or something, so I wrote a light piece for Forrest. And he said, "Oh. That was great." And then he fixed it up. And [laughs] and it was in the, ran in the *Sagebrush*. Of course,

that was one of the things that stimulated me as far as journalism—there's something about seeing what you wrote in the paper—and led to my continued interest in journalism classes, and eventually my job with the *Free Press*.

Let's see. It's difficult to remember just who in the world was on the staff of the *Sagebrush* at that time. Besides Denver Dickerson, and for a time Lloyd Leonard. Gerald Roberts was there at that time. (Was Gerry there then?) And Bill Gilmartin, who later joined the World Bank, I think, and who is a high official now, in the World Bank. I think possibly Lois Midgely, who was later married to Denver Dickerson, but is no longer and hasn't been for many years. Oh, and a woman who's long been a home-bound teacher here—dear me, Adelyn Rotholtz, was in that class, I'm sure. I suppose it wasn't much more than twice that size, I guess, [laughs] in its total. We all gathered around the table with Prof Higginbotham at the head, for our lectures and discussions, and so on; and wrote a few stories; and I wrote very few, just as few as I could get away with and still pass the course, even though I was very interested. But there's other fish to fry when you go to school. (At least, it seems to me, it was a little more that way than now. Our late son carried—I think it was eighteen or nineteen hours. He didn't participate in anything, just studied. The student body president, I introduced him one day to the student body president. He didn't even know who the student body president was [laughs], but I did! That was Tom Mayer, who attended Rotary. But anyway, I introduced Guy to Tom at some function up on the campus in the quad one time. Tom said, "Come look me up, and I'll give you a job on some committee or other." You know—nothing [laughs].)

Anyway, I wasn't in *too* many things, for that matter, but was active in journalism, and I was, I believe, sports editor of the

Artemisia. And in that particular niche, I was able to get my own name in the *Artemisia*, of course [laughs], in track and athletics, I was somewhat successful in track. But the *Artemisia* was interesting, but not as much so as the *Sagebrush*, because of the frequency of publication. The *Artemisia*, it seemed as though it was something you could put off until next week, if you had—. And then the editor'd say, "Say, we gotta get these certain plates in," or whatever, and I know very little about book-type things, and so I got my work done, and got it in, and I guess that's all I ever did with sports editor, to my recollection. I might've done a little proofreading or something like that, to help out. Can't remember who the editor of the *Artemisia* was. I don't know those years either.

And then of course, you say we haven't talked on the tape about the *Desert Wolf*. I don't know how old the *Desert Wolf* was. Tom Wilson worked on the *Desert Wolf* before I came along. A lot of his people, both before and after, and so on. Yeah. Of course, Tom—that wouldn't be too long before me—two, or three, or four years, I suppose. But, it's true, as you say, the *Desert Wolf* was an institution. It, of course, was a slick paper magazine, and depended to some extent on advertising, and some, of course, to the student, on the support of the student body fund, I guess. My recollection at the time was that the advisor, the faculty advisor was Paul Harwood.

Doctor Harwood was a very, very outwardly stern fellow, who was a very great guy, and a tremendous professor. Scared everybody; all you had to do was do your work, and be ready in class, and you'd get along all right; if you didn't, why, you got along miserably, because he wouldn't stand for anything other than an effort, at least. Of course, you always assess professors, I think. And I immediately found out, "Well, Leonard,

here's one place where you really gotta work." English courses, I had him in English courses, as well as he being the advisor to the *Desert Wolf*. He was an outstanding man, I think, incidentally. But I—sort of getting away from the *Desert Wolf* for a moment—I found that if you did your work and worked hard, and so on, and then I'd have some bent toward use of the English language, and some little bit of imagination, I guess, and so I would turn up with 1.0s and 1.5s. (And, in those days, of course, as everybody knows, a one is what a four is now.) And a 1.5 was "almost," and I got that kind of grades from Paul Harwood.

He would be lenient in his looking over each issue of the *Desert Wolf*, but not too much so. And he kept a pretty close eye on it, as a rule. The magazine itself, had, over the years, become known throughout the country in collegiate circles at least, because it was quoted, its quips and so on, were quoted in other college humor magazines—oh, for instance the *Harvard Lampoon*. What'd they call the one at Berkeley? *The Berkeley Barb*. (I guess it was the *Barb*, wasn't it? I'm not sure.) But these magazines were, then, a standard thing, just as a newspaper and a yearbook are now, in colleges all across the United States. And then, of course, at that time, there was a national magazine called *College Humor*, which picked up things from all these collegiate magazines, and the *Desert Wolf* would be included in *College Humor*, which sort of was, in general, comparable to that nutty magazine that they've gotten out in later years, *Mad*—in a sense; it was different format, but I mean it sort of seemed to fill—.

Yes, well it particularly was for the *Desert Wolf*, because getting back to it, the *Desert Wolf* eventually ran out of funds during the Depression. And we were going to school, at that time, and so Prof Harwood gave us the sad news (I presume it was) that there would

be one more issue of the *Desert Wolf*, and that would be it. But, prior to that time, the word had gotten out, I guess, and we put out an issue which then was considered extremely racy. And, how we got this by Prof Harwood, I don't know. He was probably off taking the basketball team somewhere, or something [laughs], and we went ahead and got the magazine out. And after that, and with the difficulty in financing (I guess), the *Desert Wolf* was closed down, ended its career, and left only the *Sagebrush* and the yearbook, which are published today. Specifically on the *Desert Wolf*, I can't remember exactly what we did; just always some sort of a caper, and snide remarks about certain students, and that sort of thing, too. And then also, we also naturally kept our eye on all the other magazines, and we quoted from Williams *Purple Cow*. (It was called the *Purple Cow*. I think it was Williams College from the East.) And the *Lampoon* and that sort of thing. There were lots of them that have long since slipped my mind. That's basically about all I can remember about the *Desert Wolf*. It just went out the window, and we, of course, continued in school, and graduated as staff, and so on.

RECOLLECTIONS OF GROWING UP IN RENO

On coming to Reno and selling newspapers, and so on, of course, I was provided quite an insight into Reno's attitudes and flavor and so on, but I didn't inhale very much of that, of course, until a few years later; probably when I was in high school. Even then (the late '20s), Reno of course, was really, as everyone knows world-wide famous for its divorces— or infamous, depending on your point of view. And it was really a pretty wide open type of town, of course, with the Stockade operating full blast. And, as youngsters, we would go down there once in

a while, and walk up and down the Stockade, and the girls would all laugh at us [laughs]. One or two invited us, but really, I never [laughs], I never worked up the nerve to call, on any of them, I guess. Besides which, it cost two dollars, and that was a lot of money.

At that time, of course, in Reno, the three big houses of prostitution were the Stockade, the Green Lantern, the Mohawk. There were four I guess really, because there was one (and whether or not it's contemporaneous, I'm not sure, but there was one where the Bundox is now. That had a type, either Indian or Spanish name. Forgotten it. [It was the Alamo.]

Of course, in those days, Center Street stopped, and Lake Street stopped right at the river. And Lake Street (where the Bundox is), there were the cribs, known as the cribs, right along the ridge of the river there. And they were actually the closest in, although the Mohawk was pretty close too, since I believe it was on the site of the present Mizpah Hotel. The Stockade, of course, was down in back at the present site of the Reno Police Station, across the river to the north. And the Green Lantern was well down the railroad, or well down Fourth Street. Now, I suppose, it wouldn't be very far down. Morrill Avenue. It was pretty much all by itself then, is my recollection.

Prohibition, of course, was just a sort of a thing that in Reno, as far as Reno's concerned—and I guess many other cities—but it was hardly noticeable. Of course, they did have to lock up. The bootleg joints were up alleys, and so on and so forth. Or you went through a blind in front to the bootleg joint in back. I remember that when I was about eighteen years old, we used to talk, of course, among us youngsters, about getting in, and whether or not you could get into this and that joint. And the Capital Club was probably the most prominent bootleg joint in the city.

It was on Lincoln Alley, roughly where you go into Harrah's now, from the alley, that is, of course. And I recall that I was about my present height then—just about as tall as I am now, I guess. I was about six-foot-one, and so I put a big heavy overcoat on in the wintertime, and knocked on the door, and got let in, and bought a couple of drinks in the Capital Club; and bragged about that for a long time, because the youngsters did not get in the Capital Club. In fact, my recollection is, that youngsters, people under twenty-one, were fairly well watched for getting into bootleg joints. They didn't really let them in too much, but, of course, the exceptions were bound to be.

Another fancy and really, I guess, first-class place would be the Willows, which was about—let's see General Smith, who lives high up on the hill in the southwest, can look right down to where the Willows used to be, and of course that was way, way out of town then. But, I can't remember just how far it is. It's practically gone. It originally was Rick's Resort, where I think, either James J. Jeffries, or Johnson trained—I think it was Johnson—for the heavyweight championship of the world, which was held in Reno—turn of the century time.

But anyway, there were, of course, as far as bootleg places were concerned, you could buy whiskey, or its equivalent, or what was called whiskey, from just so many places in Reno, that it didn't make any difference whether you were fifteen years old or more. But it was the higher class places that watched the youngsters, and really tended to bar them. They wouldn't let them in if they felt they were under age, even though [laughs] it was against the law in any event. Kind of a peculiar situation.

But, of course, I led a rather high-powered life for somebody without any means to speak

of, in Reno, that is my friends and I; and we were hardly Boy Scouts around town. It was a case of challenging one another. And we drank whatever we could get our hands on. And the fusel oil would rise to the top, and we'd skim it off and then drink. I'm blind in one eye, but that wasn't the reason [laughs]; I was born that way [laughs].

And "old Reno," I guess you would call that; seems to me that'd be a good name for it, Reno in the '20s. Not really old Reno; Reno's what—a hundred and five, six years old now, I guess. But, really in the '20s is the time that I can remember when Reno was a city—very small, but known world-wide, because of its mode of living, and so on. And there was a kind of a feeling about living in Reno in those days, that made you think that you were in, really, the greatest place in the country, because it was pretty wide open. There were famous people coming because of the divorce colony; many of whom, incidentally, obtained their divorces from Judge George Bartlett—"Judgie," as he was known. And Judge Bartlett had a very fine, big, old home on the hill on Court Street about across from the Wingfield home (which is now the site of a business building, built by Senator [C. Clifton] Young and his law firm). But through that home, these people who were, or had been granted divorces, or who were going to be, I guess, Judge Bartlett made a practice of knowing and inviting to his home. And they would come, up to the Bartlett home—and I only know this by report, because I certainly wasn't—. First place, I was just a youngster, and the next place, I wasn't in the social status that would provide me with any invitation to the Bartlett home. Some mighty people of the American scene were visitors in Reno at that time, of course. Among them, those who were invited and spent time at the Bartlett home (and I know this talking to the Bartlett daughters,

and by remembering anyway) included Alexander Woollcott, a man named Kellogg (who had something to do with cornflakes), Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr.; what was the name—? We did talk about—what was the name of the man that he got in the powder puff fight with— the famous cartoonist for the New Yorker? [Laughs] Anyway, he was one. Numerous other people of perhaps less national fame at the time. But they sort of typified—I think, the Bartlett home, actually, sort of typified Reno as a whole.

Then of course, there were many divorcees coming in at that time, and one could meet them without any difficulty whatsoever, because of—particularly if you went to the Riverside Hotel and that's the place where they were squired around by young men, who later became presidents of banks, owned vast properties, and so on, and so forth.

One time, I recall, we became friends—that is, some of my friends and I became friends with one young lady who was here for a divorce. And she was about as close as we ever actually came to knowing, personally, a divorcee with money. Presumably they were all around us, and everyone knew they were, actually; and they were, too. I don't think there's any question about that. But her name was—gee, I just can't remember.

Anyway, she invited us to her home, and it was out on— off of Gordon Avenue, out there when that was the ultra-ultra residential area for Reno. And, so we became quite buddy-buddy with her. We used to gather her up, and go for rides, and so on and so forth, although she was quite a bit older than we. I suppose she must have been twenty-five or twenty-eight, or somethin' like that then. But, she was a countess or a duchess by marriage, but was actually one, I guess. As I think I remarked earlier, her husband was a direct—ex-husband (the one she was going to

make an ex-husband) was a direct descendant of Rosenkrantz or Gildenstern, two characters from Shakespeare, who actually existed at one time apparently. We had a great time with her, and she was just an awful lot of fun, and that's all it [laughs] ever was actually. But we'd have a great time. She'd get in the car and drink bootleg whiskey with us, and all this sort of thing [laughs]. We had a lot of fun with the, oh, baroness—that's what she was, a baroness. And when she got her divorce, typically (almost typically), she called us and said she'd gotten it, I presume, and we all gathered and went out and got drunk. She pulled her ring off and threw it in the river, according to the old tradition in Reno, except that she threw it over the bridge at Booth Street, instead of the Virginia Street bridge [laughs].

But, a feeling is hard, I think. You remarked something about the reaction that you have, and the feeling that you have about Reno. And it's a very difficult thing to put in words, even for—. Unless I sat down at a typewriter, maybe; perhaps I might be able to do better. But there was an atmosphere about the town then, that made it different, I'm sure, from any other place. Of course, even at that, it was a great thing then, to get together and divide, and accumulate as much money as you could, and drive a car full of people—go to San Francisco; took quite a few hours.

I might mention, in connection with that, the transportation—how long it took my father to drive his buggy from Fallon to Reno. I recall several years later, after we were living in Reno, we had a Hudson Super Six, which was a real high-powered, high—oh, it was quite a car. My father probably traded somebody out of it [laughs]. (He was always trading something.) But the Hudson Super Six was really some car. And so we were going to drive to San Francisco—no, Sacramento, where my mother's sister lived. We were

gonna drive to Sacramento. And we pulled out past the Crescent Creamery, which was then at the very west edge of Reno, with the rising sun shining right through the back window of the Hudson. And we came into Sacramento, without really any great difficulties, except the usual things. We arrived in Sacramento with the sun right in our eyes. That's how long it took to drive from Reno to Sacramento. And I remember, not too many years ago, that a jet flew it in eight minutes, or something like that [laughs], you know [laughs].

How about my neighbors on Third Street? I'll talk a little about the neighborhood itself. Next door to us, on the east, was the Pincolini home. The head of that household was Joe Pincolini. One of his daughters is a very well-known Reno matron, Delma Roecker—very fine golfer; works for—I think Delma may still—last I remember she was working a little bit in Joseph Magnin's, I think more or less for the exercise really. Her older sister, Melba Pincolini—beautiful girl—as a youngster, got infantile paralysis in the great infantile paralysis epidemic and ruined one leg. And then Joe Pincolini was very successful, I presume both during Prohibition and after, in the spirits, and so on. And anyway, Joe Pincolini built the Mizpah Hotel, which still stands to this day. I don't presume the Pincolinis have anything to do with it any more. There are other Pincolinis, who now own, I believe, the El Cortez, and they're of the same general family, I believe. But I didn't, I only knew them very, very casually. Delma Roecker, Mrs. Roecker, is the only one that really is close. Mrs. Pincolini and Melba moved to Los Angeles, and lived after Mr. Pincolini—after his death (I guess it was after his death).

Next door on the west side, was a man by the name of Miller, he and Mrs. Miller. And it was considered a very fancy house

as against our little ole white house on West Third Street. Mr. Miller, coincidentally, was a miller! He was the general manager of the flour mill down the river. And we really didn't see too much of them, from our house at 409, except perhaps to say good morning or something. They had numerous functions. I remember they had one outdoor function in back of their home where they had quite a number of guests (not including their next-door neighbors). And we had a shed which ran in back, and so we had a pear tree, or the Millers had a pear tree in the back, I guess. And we had a pear tree in front. so we went up, a couple of us, went up our front yard and gathered up a lot of pears from our pear tree, and threw them down, so they'd come down through the pear tree onto the table. And they thought the pears were merely falling off the trees. And we kept doing this [laughs] until we ran it into the ground, and then there was trouble, and then we ran. But the Millers—. I can't recall very much about the Millers, except that he ran the milling company.

On the street on the corner, of course, I think, was Matt Dromiack's home. That's on the corner of Ralston. This was a double block from Chestnut Street (Arlington, that we lived on) to Ralston Street. Of course, the Dromiacks, too were sort of in the heart of the business of Reno. And they were only speaking acquaintances, I guess, at that.

There was another house or so, in between a block. But, I can't recall who lived in them much. Oh. One young man by the name of Jack Dunn, with whom I was very friendly for a time. But I haven't the slightest idea what his parents did. Right behind us, across Chestnut Place (which was the alley, now known as Austin, no—can't remember what that alley's called now. (Its name is changed.) The family—I'm sorry I started that. It's right

where the car wash is, next to Fransden apartments. No, I can't remember.

But once I went to a Marine Corps—the Marine Corps took a bunch of us from Reno and flew us down to look at the Marine situation down at Camp Pendleton, and so on and so forth. And he, this young man, just happily—what in the world was that family's name; it was an Italian-type name— but they had each one of us, the recruits, the ones who'd just gone into the Marine Corps, stand at attention, of course, and we would march up—they would—this young man would come up, and they'd get all of the Nevada youngsters that they could, and they had about enough for whoever went down on this plane ride. It turned out that he was of this family from right across the alley [laughs], where I was raised.

But no neighborhood gang-type things, or neighborhood ball club. Yes. Well no. Mary S. Doten baseball team. But, of course, I was blind in one eye, and I was not really much of a baseball player at the time, and so on and so forth. I couldn't make the team, and that made me mad. Harold Curran, who you may know, was one of my very best boyhood chums. And he lived down—that is real early— Harold, the Currans lived on Chestnut Street (Arlington Avenue), in part of what is now the Sands. You know, that's on Arlington, isn't it? Right across the tracks. Harold Curran, of course, was for many years the city purchasing agent and so on; very fine athlete in Reno High School, and also played with my brother and people of that caliber in athletics. Another boyhood friend of mine was Johnny Dennison, who worked also for the city. (I think John did.) I grew up with him. And he was a Mary S. Doten type also. And Johnny died quite a number of years ago. I don't know exactly what happened. But, of course, as time goes by, you sort of lose track. I run into Harold

at parties, and cocktail shindigs, and so on, during holidays and that sort of thing. Of course, he was married to Virginia Wheeler, who is Buck Wheeler's sister.

The athletic situation was mostly, as far as I was concerned, referred mostly to our schools, and representative of our schools in the athletic teams. But, at one time I recall, we did have, tried to get together a football team from the neighborhood, and I think played a game or two, including playing on Mackay field during an off day, and so on and so forth. But, I didn't weigh very much, and I didn't amount to very much there. But some did. Included in those I remember, one was Eddie Spina, who was short, husky, and very, very tough. And he would be our ball carrier most of the time. But that, as I recall, outside of a little marauding on Halloween, is the only time we ever had a gang get together and do anything in concert [laughs].

Eddie Spina, incidentally, was the younger brother, is the younger brother of the late Frank Spina, who operated a shoe repair shop across from the Elks Club, and where the great blast of 1957 (February of '57, I believe), but anyway, he lost his life in that explosion during a fire and explosion. The Spinis lived up here on Washington Street someplace, if I remember correctly. And then of course, since then, I read Spina's a very well-known coach. I can't recall now his—. Oh Rocco. Oh, oh, Rocco yeah. He was the eldest. No. He wasn't a coach; he was head of the Reno Recreation Department. Yeah, yes. The later generation have become coaches and so on. Sure, there's Rocco. Yeah, Rocco was far away from me, because he was even a year or so older than my brother, I guess. My goodness, he was an old man. Old Rocco. But, of course, Rocco was a tremendous pitcher. And he was the Mary S. Doten's pitcher when baseball was a big thing in the grade schools of Reno. Rocco

Spina, he was sort of a hero type to me, you know, because he was the pitcher for Mary S. Gosh, I'd forgotten about Rocco. That's awful [laughs]. But, the reason is, of course, the further away you get in—just younger, as I don't remember what the younger Spinis did, but reading about them in the sports and so on and so forth. So you don't remember, I think, what older people—.

My best means of earning money, when I was old enough to do so, of course, was working in molding mills. I went to work first, for the Jesse E. Smith Lumber Company. And that was located where there is still a lumber company, at the railroad tracks on Ralston Street.

My recollections of my early days in Reno, that is in the '20s mainly, a number of things, of course, always come to mind such as the big movies of that day, and the visit here of ex-President Wilson. And, of course, E. E. Roberts, who was probably best known not for his great administrative ability or anything, but for two things: that he was, at least to young people—to young males—he was the father-in-law of Walter Johnson, the great baseball player, and that he stated that he'd put a barrel of whiskey on every corner—a story, of course, that everybody knows that's lived in Reno for any long time.

Athletically, of course, youngsters are always interested in it, and my two great recollections involve a game that I did not participate in; that is, football. And when I was a youngster, I recall the time that Nevada played University of California to a nothing-to-nothing tie, which was an upset of nationwide consequence in the sports field. And I recollect standing at the corner of Second and Virginia Street, and the whole campus, it seemed, had moved right down into that intersection and was jammed in there, singing songs, and cheering, and the

whole town seemed to be enraptured by this great feat, which it really was. It was such a startling thing; mainly due to the toe of Spud Harrison who kept California at bay, and eventually the game wound up a nothing-to-nothing tie, which of course, is athletic history.

But it did seem, only about a dozen years later (I think it was 1933), when Nevada defeated St. Mary's, which was equally a tremendous and startling upset, the campus, of course, went hog-wild, and the Little Waldorf was a shambles. But I don't believe the town, the townspeople were equally interested as they had been in '21, or whenever the Cal-Nevada tie took place. Kind of indicates that as Reno's beginning to grow, and in a dozen years' time, there was a little more separation between the campus and downtown.

THE START OF MY NEWSPAPER CAREER

THE *ELKO DAILY FREE PRESS*

Journalism, proved, of course, to be just as interesting— much more interesting than I thought it was going to be. And I learned a great deal under Professor Higginbotham, who was the only journalism professor on the campus, at the time, I think. I recall your saying he did not start the courses in journalism, but they were started by Laura Ambler. I think you will have to admit though, that they grew under Professor Higginbotham—whose students went out into the world of journalism, and really did very, very well—some of them even getting national fame. Bob [Robert E.] Miller, one of the greatest foreign correspondents, perhaps in the history of the United Press organization, for one. A good many others, also.

Denver Dickerson went on to operate a weekly paper in Carson City; was elected to the assembly and was speaker of the assembly. Became speaker of the assembly, and eventually also operated a *Nevada Labor News* (I think it was called) in Reno, and then

went into the foreign service, and eventually wound up as the Secretary of Guam. That ran out, of course, when the Democrats ran out of steam [laughs] in Congress. And Denver came back, operated a public relations firm in San Francisco for a time and is now on a Senate staff, I believe (and I've forgotten which one [chuckles]), in Washington.

As far as I was concerned, not long before I was due to graduate from the University of Nevada, Chris Sheerin, who was editor of the *Elko Daily Free Press*, came to Reno and talked to Professor Higginbotham, and said he was going to need a reporter-editor type. And Prof Higginbotham recommended me (and perhaps among others, I'm not sure). So I got an interview with Mr. Sheerin, and he hired me, and when I graduated I went to Elko, where I lived for the next six years, and worked as a reporter and editor of the *Elko Daily Free Press*. In May of 1938, just after I'd been in Elko a year or two, why Gwen and I were married. So, she then, of course, came to Elko and joined me, having been a school teacher at Ely, following her graduation.

Both Ely and Elko were pretty small towns in those days. I guess Ely is greatly expanded. Of course Elko has, I guess—there were less than four thousand, I think, when I went to Elko, and I suppose Elko now is seven thousand, nine thousand—I'm not sure.

But newspaper work in Elko with Chris Sheerin and with E. M. Steninger, who's by now, sort of one of the legendary early day newspaper people, was a very interesting experience. Mr. Steninger was a small, sort of wizened, old man at the time that I—but very, very vigorous. He must've been only about five-feet-four or five inches tall, and probably didn't weigh over a hundred and ten pounds. But he was a hard driving, unyielding type of newspaper man, who got in quite a little trouble because of his stands that he took, and so on, editorially.

I recall at one point he told me that a number of years before I came to Elko, of course—quite a number, I guess—he had written an editorial concernin' the activities of some of the ranchers up in northern Elko County. And then, just by coincidence, he got in his car and went out hunting in this particular area. And he pulled off to the side of the road, and he and—I think he had one other person with him. I don't remember now. In any event, the first thing he heard was the *Zzzzzzzzzinnnggg* of a rifle bullet going over him [laughs]. He remembered where he was and that this particular rancher was one of those that he had landed on editorially. So he dived under the car and there were several other shots fired at him. He was not hit, and the car was still runnable, so he got in the car and drove back to Elko, safely enough. And he figured that whoever it was that was attacking him, had run out of ammunition, I guess [laughs]. Anyway, he got in his car and scampered out of there. He didn't have too many experiences like that, but there was a

time in Elko when Mr. Steninger first ran the paper, I guess, where he walked down the street, in the middle of the street, and not on the sidewalks, because his editorial activities [laughs] sort of stirred up certain members of the population of Elko and Elko County.

Mr. Steninger eventually sold his half of the newspaper to his son, Eber. Then for many, many years Chris Sheerin and Eber Steninger—Chris also had gotten an interest in the paper—were the publishers of the *Elko Daily Free Press*. They were, all the time that I was there, from 1936 to 1942.

A small town reporter does a great many things. And, of course, one of the things that I did, is when I went out on my beat, I would cover both news story spots, and also advertisers. And I'd drop in on my way, and I'd take advertising as I walked down the sidewalks, and they'd give me classified ads and I'd write that down. I'd call on the grocery man to see if the copy for his ad was ready, and then I'd go to the courthouse and see what I could find in the matter of news, and so on [laughs]. Quite a conglomeration, as newspapering was known in larger cities and known today.

As I say, I was there about, guess I was there six years. And, December 7, 1941 came by, and the Japanese started to disturb things. And so, Chris was sure that it was going to have a very adverse effect on business—that World War II would. He thought perhaps I'd better look around. Almost contemporaneously with that, I guess, Graham Dean, the publisher of the *Reno Evening Gazette* and the *Nevada State Journal*, dropped in the office and talked to me about coming to work for the *Gazette*. So that would've been in, oh, I guess, about—terribly early in '42, not too long after Pearl Harbor. So Chris and I parted company very amicably. It was a nice step for me, and it got me off of Chris's payroll. I think he was paying

me a hundred and sixty-five dollars a month at that time.

BIG NEWS IN ELKO COUNTY, NEVADA

I'll talk a little bit more about life in Elko, and some of the big stories that were so important during the '30s. The ones that picked up just in the first year or so that I was there, included the big Mormon cricket invasion, and the first time the streamliner made its trip across the country, and the murder of Godecke, and Heitman, and Arrascada, and one little old man besides. Let's see. Oh, the discussions over the Taylor Grazing Act to which a lot of people expressed considerable opposition up in Elko county. There was fighting over the Taylor Grazing Act [laughs] all the time— so often, I think, it would be almost impossible to say very much about it, there was so much about it.

It wasn't too long after I arrived in Elko and was on the "staff" of the *Free Press*, if that's what you call it [laughing]. I was the reporter, city editor, and so on. But, I think it was in 1937 [1936] that one of the big, most tragic stories occurred in Elko. It seems that three cattle buyers came from Douglas County. There was [Walter] Ed Godecke, Otto Heitman and Manuel Arrascada. Oh, that's right. There were just two from Douglas County, and they came to buy cattle from Manuel Arrascada, who was of course, a pretty good, pretty large-sized cattle grower in Elko. They drove the cattle one day in the fall, I guess. This would've been the fall of '37 or '36. (It really was soon after I got there wasn't it?) They drove the cattle down to the sheds (or brought them down there in trucks, I've forgotten how.) But, anyway, the sheds just west of Elko. And then they vanished. The three of them vanished. Nobody could find them, and there was a tremendous hunt went

on. At one point, my competitor on the *Elko Independent*, Forrest Bibb, managed to get a hint that something tragic had happened to them, or that they'd found them. And he put out an extra, I recall, on this. Then *Free Press* came along also with a big story, but we didn't put out an extra, as I recall.

In any event, the bodies of Arrascada, and Heitman, and Godecke, together with that of an old man, were found in the old man's shanty down by the Humboldt River, not far from where the cattle pens were. This, of course, was news in Elko that just shook everyone, and naturally back in Douglas County, where Mr. Heitman and Mr. Godecke came from; also caused great anxiety first, and then sadness after the bodies were found. These three ranchers, and this old man that occupied the cabin, were found shot to death with their hands tied behind them; shot with a .22 rifle, .22 automatic pistol, I guess it was, or at least a .22 pistol.

After their disappearance, a man by the name of Luther Jones, who had escaped—not escaped, he'd been paroled— paroled from Montana State Prison (I think that's where it was) had made his way down south as far as Wells, or that vicinity, commandeered an automobile and forced the driver to drive him from somewhere in the vicinity of Wells on an old road, staying off the highway, till he arrived in Elko. Guess he still had a little money from what he'd been given when he left the penitentiary. But he somehow or other got down to where these men were loading the cattle, and he forced them to put their hands up, and marched them down to the river, towards the—, crowded the four of them into this shack—that is, the old man, who was sort of peg-legged, old—oh, I guess sort of a derelict. And then Jones proceeded to empty his gun into the heads of these men. This all having taken place, he left, hitchhiked his

way to Carlin, where he got in a poker game and caused a disturbance. And the constable at Carlin, whose name I can't remember, but who was an excellent police officer—jailed Jones for disturbing the peace. The bodies, of course, of these four men, previously having been shot, had not yet been found. And then, in interrogating Luther Jones at Carlin, eventually his true name, which *was* Luther Jones, came out. He'd gone under another name, if I remember, at the outset. So, he was taken back to Elko, of course, and lodged in the county jail.

The feeling in Elko was so high, that at one point, we found out in the newspaper, that there was a movement on foot to get a number of Elko residents to go take Mr. Jones out of the courthouse jail, and hang him to the nearest tree. However, this, never, of course, happened. The district attorney, Doug Castle at the time, assured everyone that Jones would get his just desserts. And I forgot— somehow or other in the interrogation, he admitted that he had done something to these men, and that was how—he even went so far as to tell them where the bodies could be found. And the police in Elko went down there and found the bodies.

But eventually, Jones was tried. I recall that the judge was James Dysart at that time. And the judge appointed C. B. Tapscott as the defense attorney, and when he did so, Tapscott (who later was an assistant attorney general and now practices in Reno) said that Jones had no more chance than anything, and that what's more he didn't want to defend the "damn murderer," or something like that. And Judge Dysart quickly changed his mind [laughs] and said, "You *will* defend him." And so Tapscott did, and did as well as could be expected under the circumstances. But, Jones, of course, was found guilty and sentenced to death then; eventually was executed, in Carson.

Another of the stories, in many ways even more tragic in some respects, at least in numbers, was the wreck of the City of San Francisco, which occurred, I believe, in October of 1938. I was sitting—we were playing pan at our apartment in Elko that night with—I think Mr. and Mrs. Newton Crumley were our guests, perhaps some other people. (I'm sure we were playing cards, and I guess it was pan. It might've been bridge. Anyway, [laughs] who cares.) But, in any event, comparatively early in the evening, although perhaps eight or nine o'clock, I don't remember, a knock came on my door, and it was Earl Frantzen, who is now a partner in the ownership of the *Elko Daily Free Press* and was then a printer and linotype operator I guess. Came to the door, and said, "Paul. I've just heard from my dad." And his father was an employee of the railroad. Although I think it was Western Pacific, Mr. Frantzen, Sr.

But in any event, he had heard that the City of San Francisco was, as Earl put it, "in the ditch" down near Palisade Canyon, which was, what, perhaps thirty-five, forty miles west of Elko. Earl then went up and woke Chris Sheerin, who was editor of the *Free Press* (or perhaps it was vice versa). But anyway, we got together and decided that there was nothing to do but we must naturally go down there. And by this time, it'd been more or less confirmed that the City of San Francisco had left the rails, and that it was a terrible accident. So, we went down there in the middle of the night. By this time it was getting pretty late at night. And Chris Sheerin and I had to walk across a trestle (a bridge) from a little station named Harney.

And the City of San Francisco was indeed in a mess. The train had been westbound, and the engineer said later, that he saw a tumbleweed on the track, and paid little attention to it, but as soon as he did see it

(as it was rounding a curve and heading towards this bridge), the drivers of the diesel powered City of San Francisco, left the track, and one of them, as the train wobbled, one of these drivers, the front driver I guess, hit the bridge, hit one of the girders of the bridge, and when it did that, the train was probably going seventy, seventy-five miles an hour, somewhere in there; it just smashed one car right after the other, and the cars tumbled like match sticks up into the air, and down into the Humboldt River.

And, of course, throughout that night, there was rescue operations, and many, many people involved, particularly from Elko. Newspapermen, of course, came from Reno; John Sanford and I think Joe Jackson. And a train was made up to come from Carlin or Elko—I wouldn't know which now—to take the wounded and the dead back to Elko to the hospital. When the train finally came to a stop, the back cars were still in perfect shape, and nothing wrong, and sitting on the rails. People who happened to be lucky enough to be in the back, hardly knew there was an accident, until they got out and looked at the tremendous carnage in front. I think twenty-one people were killed in the wreck of the City of San Francisco, and about a hundred injured. And of course, when I got to the Elko hospital, injured were lining the halls, and it was just a terrible bit of confusion. And Elko didn't have too many doctors at that time. I remember Doctor Les Moren, who's still practicing in Elko, and a very, very prominent doctor, but had worked—I don't know how many hours without ever getting any rest, of course—as did the other doctors in Elko at that time. I just happen to know a little more about Dr. Moren since he's a personal friend.

But, Chris and I got there, and the police said, "Well, would you like to take a walk, down the side, off the sides, and down toward

the river?" and so Chris and I did that. This man had a flashlight, this policeman. Bill Van Valkenberg was his name. I think maybe he was a state policeman—by that time, I guess, the state had gotten there—but a resident of Elko. He took us down, and there were bodies, many bodies still around at that time. And it was a terrible, terrible scene, and in the eerie night of October, it was rather shivery. Gwen, incidentally, thought perhaps they'd better get in the car, and come down and see; maybe they could help people or help us. Gwen, along with Mr. and Mrs. Roy Bankofier, and Mrs. Orville Wilson, also, went down to the scene of the wreck, and assisted in any way they could.

Of course, I barely saw them, because we were pickin' up all this information and so on, to get ready to go back. In the meantime, the United Press had been alerted in Salt Lake also, and Murray Moler, who was a native of Nevada and graduated from the University of Nevada, was then the intermountain editor for the United Press. He came out, as did another United Press man, and I presume, the Associated Press people also. Of course, they were represented, too, by the *Gazette*. And the rescue operation, of course, with the wreck, lasted well into the next day, by which time we had to get back to get the *Free Press* out. The United Press assisted us in this, too, because they picked up stories; we picked up stories, Chris Sheerin and I. And so we did have a fairly complete story about the wreck of the City of San Francisco.

Subsequently, there was a hearing on the cause of the wreck. This, of course, was many, many months later. And the Southern Pacific company claimed that the train had been sabotaged. And they found a coat—the officials—the SP found a man's coat—did not apparently have any connection with the wreck itself, and therefore, they were

convinced, they said that this coat belonged to a man who had tampered with the tracks and wrecked the City of San Francisco. A good many people were very skeptical of the SP's story, of course, realizing the possibilities of suit and all that sort of thing. The SP would naturally try to claim that it had been sabotaged. However, there's one peculiar situation that makes you think, and I have always thought to this day, the Southern Pacific really had evidence.

The next day or the day after that, the SP invited the press, took us all back out to the scene of the accident. As I had mentioned, the back cars of the train were not harmed, and were still sitting on the track. The Southern Pacific experts in this matter had the press down on their hands and knees, and looking underneath the cars that were still sitting on the track. And there was a tie plate, I guess you'd call it. (I'm not an expert in railroad matters.) But there was a tie plate or something of that nature, which had been pulled up, and the track moved back, and then the spikes put back in, so that the track did not match it at its break—on its point on the tie plate. Now, how this was done—and I don't know, but some people, of course, thought that or had the opinion that maybe the railroad had done this, but it never—I could never see how this could be possible, since there were people sleeping in those cars right above it, and they would've had to get under it, and hammer it and bang and so on to have gone to all that trouble. Therefore, the assumption, in my view, was that it must've been done before; that is, that it was the thing that had thrown the trains off the tracks. I cannot, for the life of me, remember the upshot of that whole case. I presume, of course, there were many, many suits filed, and all that sort of thing, but I don't know—that's kind of lost in antiquity [laughs]. What,

thirty-six years ago. I had seen it on its first run through Elko.

It was fairly new, and it came in, and I think I wrote a story about it coming by, before that. Of course, subsequent, what happened to it was so mammoth that I've forgotten if I did write about it, as it made its maiden run, as it were. That would've been, gosh, not over a year or so before. 'Thirty-six it came through—'36 was the first? Well, it had been running a couple of years I guess. It would depend on whether I wrote about it, I guess, on whether or not it was the latter part of '36 or—. I can't remember about a crowd around. In fact, I can't say that I really remember when it came through. It was, of course, the City of San Francisco was really the first of the great streamliners, in this part of the nation anyway. I don't know, elsewhere, maybe the Santa Fe had one similar to that. But it was really the pride of the SP. But it wasn't much after all those cars went up into the sky and plunged down into the Humboldt River. And, as Chris and I got there, they were pulling bodies out of the dining car, I think it was. Perhaps they only pulled out three or four there, but it seemed they just never quit pulling bodies out of that car. It was a mammoth thing, and something of a news experience for someone who'd only been in the newspaper business for a couple of years, a little over, I guess.

Of course, another one of the big stories in Elko—did we talk about the crickets? There was a great cricket invasion. It was about the same time, '36 or '37 somewhere in there. The crickets came from the north mainly, or northwest, I guess. The mysterious thing about them is that, hardly anyone knew about the crickets, even down in Elko when the crickets were in Elko County. There may have been some warning, but they were so-called Mormon crickets, because they were similar

to the crickets which attacked Salt Lake City in its early days, and which were eaten by the gulls. But, you'd've had to have a good many more sea gulls for this invasion. Of course, they sort of had outriders, and the crickets would, after they got down into Elko, County, that is. The word, of course, eventually did get out that the crickets were on the march, and that they were coming by the millions. And literally, they came by the millions. Came down, and as they would come to the creek, they would jump into the creek until the creek was covered with crickets, and then the crickets coming behind them would jump onto those crickets, and off and on to the land again on the other side.

Of course, there was a great rush from the state and everyone, to try to stop the invasion, in the north of Elko. And they sent Lee Burge and a crew with dusters, hand-carried dusters, to Elko County to dust the crickets. And of course, Lee had his men up and down the firing line, as it were, trying to stop these crickets. And they'd dust them, and the crickets would get sick and die by the jillions, but still they would come more, and more, and more, until Also, another thing, and I guess Lee Burge was in charge of this too. They would dig great trenches, and the crickets would come to the trenches, and then they'd pour gasoline, and burn the crickets by the millions, I guess you'd say. And then they'd cover the trenches.

In the meantime, the crickets would keep right on coming, and pretty soon they were getting near Elko, city of Elko. And up and down, of course, on a wide front, they came. Crickets. Finally, Gwen and I just lived above the airport; we could look right down on the airport. And the crickets started coming into the airport area, and from that point on toward Reno for a couple of miles—I don't know how far, but way down. And they hit the

highway. And they went across the highway, and then the cars would come by, smash the crickets, and the highway was greasy, and accidents then occurred from the fact that the crickets were being smashed on the highway.

But when they hit the airport—of course, we had many stories in the paper before this. So I took off from the office and went out to the airport, and they were really beginning to come into the airport. The crickets were not exactly what you'd call intelligent critters. For instance, I noticed one thing they would do; you'd find them on top of the posts, fence posts. Crickets would come to a place, such as a fence post, and they wouldn't move two inches, to go around the fence post. They would jump onto the fence post and eventually the next one would jump on. Then they would crawl up to the top of the fence post, and down the other side of the fence post [chuckles], and march on.

They're actually very peculiar. I think it was Lee or someone told me that what they would do, they would go a long, long way, sometimes right through perfectly good fields, and not touch anything. And then, almost as though a signal went out, they'd all start to eat, wherever they were. And of course, when they started to eat, there was nothing left, 'cause they were so massive. Well, eventually, of course, the cricket invasion ended, after considerable destruction. The next year there was another invasion, to my recollection, but not nearly as many. And then the next year there were just a few, and then there were none. And I don't believe there've been any since that to amount to anything. Where they actually hatched and came from, to my best recollection, nobody ever knew—up around Idaho— somewhere up in there, I guess.

In the recreation area, we talked a bit about rodeos, for one thing. And a very,

somewhat interesting thing about Elko was that the rodeo there was privately staged at first, by Les Garcia. And I guess his father, at that time, was still alive. But anyway, Les was the moving force behind it, and of course, the Garcia Saddlery in Elko, for one thing, was greatly noted for its saddles—sold for two or three times the price of ordinary saddles, I guess—handmade. And they had the saddlery on Commercial Street in Elko, just—oh, right downtown on Commercial Street [chuckles]. Eventually, Les Garcia moved the saddlery to Salinas, and they made saddles there then, and sort of in conjunction with the fact that in Salinas, of course, they have a tremendous rodeo down there.

Then Les, eventually, he married and moved to Reno (or moved to Reno and married, I've forgotten which way [laughs], but—), and built a very, very beautiful home out on Windy Hill, where he still resides I guess. I haven't seen Les for several years. But he staged the rodeo independently. And the rodeo grounds, at that time in Elko, were located south of the river, south of the Humboldt River. Eventually, of course, after, they were sponsored by the county and underwriters, I presume. I don't recall now why the rodeo was moved to the fairgrounds, where it was held for a good many years. Then eventually—I'm speaking now of the professional riders—the Rodeo Cowboys Association of America Rodeos—and Les contracted with them as they do in all rodeos, to stage one at Elko each year. It wasn't too many years after I got there, however, maybe only one or two I guess that Les gave this up, and then it was taken over by the county, and eventually, I think—maybe—I don't know what caused it, but eventually the rodeos were canceled out (that was after I left), or else were staged only by amateurs. And about that time, I guess the Reno Rodeo was getting big

too, and so the pros came here, and so Elko went out of existence as a big rodeo town in the West.

At one time there were two big public functions in Elko each year. One, of course, was the rodeo; the other the Elko County Fair. The Elko County Fair has continued to survive, and very healthily so as far as I know, because people come from miles, and miles, and miles to attend the Elko County Fair. One reason, of course, probably the major reason being they have horse racing, pari-mutuel betting, et cetera. So. But the Elko County Fair is a tremendous party [laughs], I'd guess you'd say, for Elko each year, and is also sort of a lodestone for former Elkoans to go to Elko and see their old friends, and wander up and down, tell lies, and bet on the horses, also watch them do the displays, the usual county fair type displays.

The horses, of course, the gallopers, the ponies for the races, are brought from very many ranches and so on, ranging from up into Montana, I guess. And of course, they're not the top horses, but it makes very little difference if they get good jockeys and so on, and the horses are about equal, why, they make for very good betting. My next-door neighbor, by the way, used to have horses, race horses, and took them down from—or brought them up from Vegas, I guess, and ran them at Ely. He said he didn't run at Elko.

And big stories, other than, of course, the City of San Francisco (which we've already combed it out thoroughly, I guess), was the tremendous tragedy in the copper mine at Mountain City, Mountain City Copper Company mine, which I think four men were asphyxiated. And then of course, there were numerous violent deaths and so on. At one point this old man ran a secondhand store on Commercial Street, by the name of N. Davis. Nobody ever knew what the N. stood

for. And he was a chunky, ugly, noncommittal type, who ran his little secondhand store; apparently no problems. And one morning the store didn't open, and the police came, I guess, to open it, because somebody said somethin', "N. Davis's store didn't open, and he opens every morning, rain or shine." So they broke down the—or maybe the back door was broken in when the police went around, and N. Davis was lying in a pool of blood. His head had been split with an axe, and that made quite a story. And, as far as I know, no one was ever arrested; they never found who had done it.

Of course, in Elko, as far as the violent news was concerned, it was almost—seems in this day, there was almost weekly, there was a tremendous automobile accident, east or west of Elko. There was always people getting killed, and they were always bringing bodies to the mortuary [chuckles], and people to the hospital; still going on, too, out in Elko, because, of course, the reason is the long reaches of the highway, and people get going faster than they think and wind up bashing into something, or someone else.

There was another big shooting on the Rim Rock. I remember, much vaguer in my mind, a Basque sheepherder (I think it was) went hog wild and picked up a rifle and killed two or three people, or something. I recall Orville Wilson defended him. In the tradition of Joe Mac, he either got a very light sentence, comparatively light sentence, or something like that.

But, economically, of course, there were times when the price of cattle went down, and when the price of cattle went up, and whatever happened to the price of cattle, happened to Elko. It's almost like shutting down, shutting down Kennecott as far as Ely is concerned, except it's a little slower process. And sometimes the price would go up and up.

And I recall at one point, just after I'd gone back to Elko and was in the hotel business, the price of cattle went way up; I think twenty-seven cents—was a tremendous price for cattle. (I think that was the figure.)

I remember J. Ralph Smith, who now lives in Reno incidentally, operated a ranch up in Pleasant Valley near Lamoille; and he was standing at the bar in the Stockmen's Hotel, and worrying about whether he should sell, or would it go higher, or wouldn't it? And he finally sold at twenty-seven or eight, or something like that. Of course, made a tremendous amount of money for those days.

On the other hand, before I got there, in fact, I think several years before, around '31 or two. But cattle, the price went down to five cents, and those were really dreary, dreary days for places like Elko County, which depended so heavily on the price of cattle, and the price of sheep.

And speaking of the price of sheep, have you had any feedin' on Pete Itcaina. No. Oh, well. Pete Itcaina was a sheep man, one of the biggest sheep men in the West. The spelling is I-t-c-a-i-n-a; pronounced It-chi-na. Pete Itcaina, at one time, either owned or had rights to drive his sheep from Wells clear down to the winter feeding grounds in southern White Pine County. He was down in the Depression, I guess. When his fortunes were at their lowest ebb, he went in (after he had given a great deal of business to a store owned by the Quilicis, I think their name was, in Wells), and Pete Itcaina went in and said, "Quilici, I've no money now, but could I have something for the crew tending my sheep?" (And things were really tough then.)

Quilici said, "Pete, you've done a lot of business with me. As long as I have groceries on the shelves, you can have em.

So, of course, Pete Itcaina's fortunes turned, and the price of sheep went up, and

he had them by the thousands, and tens of thousands of sheep. And from that day, for years, even though he could've gotten a better price from someone else, he bought only from the Quilici brothers in Wells.

But, Pete Itcaina was very—he wasn't illiterate, I guess, but very nearly so. And he was a millionaire, and he was represented by Jack Robbins, which indicates that—he [laughing]—multimillionaire, most of the time, I guess. He wore high bib overalls. He couldn't talk. He couldn't express himself very well. And if he was drinking, he just pounded on the bar [laughs]. And there are many, many stories told about Pete Itcaina. But one of the most interesting, I think, was the truth, and eventually appeared in *Life* magazine, I think, or in some national magazine.

Pete Itcaina went into the Silver Dollar Club in Elko, which is on the corner of Fourth and Commercial (or was then; don't know whether it's still there or not). He went in, and stood at the bar, and put a dollar down. And the bartender looked at him, and Pete Itcaina undoubtedly had tobacco juice running down the sides of his mouth, and was in high bib overalls, and needed a shave, and was not very tall, a very unprepossessing looking man—stocky, strong, but—you know. So, he stood there and waited, and finally pounded on the bar, and the bartender said, in effect, "Just wait a minute mister. I'll get around to you when I'm ready." And he had some pretty live ones at the bar apparently; he was paying too much attention to them. This made Pete Itcaina very, very angry. And he walked out and went over to Jack Robbins' office and bought the Silver Dollar, and fired the bartender. This actually happened. You hear about these things, but this, it actually happened. And it made quite a story. But this was Pete, and he was—. I knew him only—I'd recognize him

when he'd come into Elko from the sheep camps, and one thing or another.

I think Pete Itcaina is a character, or was a character, that really is often forgotten when it comes to Elko County. You could almost write an article about Pete Itcaina if you could find someone who really knew about him. It wouldn't be easy, because (chuckles) he didn't say much; he just ran sheep—but, oh, how he ran sheep. And how he got his start, I haven't got the slightest idea. Undoubtedly, born in Bilbao, Spain or some area. He was Basque. But, at one time, I've forgotten how many millions of dollars he was worth. Well, that's Pete Itcaina.

I haven't said anything very much about the politics of Elko County. I was not into politics then, you see. Chris usually handled the political thing. I recall covering a speech of Key Pittman's in Elko. (In his latter days I guess it would be, yeah, it would have to be, 'cause I didn't go there till '36, and he died in '40.) Key came to Elko, and he was, well, he was in fairly good shape [laughs]. You could tell that he wasn't in perfect shape when he made his speech, but drew a good crowd up in the Elks Club. But, you know, I can't remember—. I know that the politicians did come through, and I suppose I talked to them. In fact, speaking of politicians coming through, I once talked to Herbert Hoover walking across the Elko airport. He was coming, going over to Winnemucca, where he had an interest in some big mine. This was *ex-president* Hoover, of course. And so Chris said, "Well, President Hoover's gonna land at the airport." (He got the news from telephones through United Press, or somehow or other, and he was scheduled—. Or maybe, Chris may have gotten it from some of the attorneys, businessmen, or whoever in Elko. I don't know. But we knew he was coming.) And then he did. And he got out of the plane,

and I walked right up to the plane, and I was—this must’ve only been in ’37 or eight, or somewhere like that— and I was just as nervous as a cat [laughs], you know. I knew I was gonna talk to one of the ex-presidents of the United States. So I’d written down some little questions that I was gonna ask him [laughs]—what he was doing, you know. And my story was along this line, because I asked him all the way from the plane clear into the terminal building, “Well, Mr. Hoover, are you going to do such and such? What is your purpose here?”

“Can’t say. Not pertinent. No. No. No.”

So I just wrote the story that way. Ex-president Hoover arrived in Elko today [laughs] and here’s the report on what he told the Elko reporter [laughs], and I just had these blank spaces. Because he would, just didn’t say anything, went right through the terminal, got in the car, drove to Winnemucca to look at his mine, or wherever it was. I think it was somewhere in Humboldt County. That was my only experience with ex-presidents that I can think of [laughs]. Mr. Hoover was—. [Laughs] I really was so aggravated at him, that I—. [Laughing] He eventually became, you know, kind of a father image of the United States, in his last days and so on. But every time I saw a picture of President Hoover, I thought of walking across that airfield, and him grunting at me, and refusing to talk to this whippersnapper [laughs].

But aside from that experience, which was interesting but nonproductive, and covering Key Pittman (and of course, on occasion I did stories on Jack Robbins), the political field, as far as I was concerned in Elko, was very, very skimpy, as opposed, of course, to later days when I was the editorial—wrote editorials and so on in the *Nevada State Journal*. In the first place, you were a big frog then, but with the *Free Press*, not so much so. Once in

a while you might do something. But there was—I had no chance and no—I was never a political analyst or anything of that nature in the *Free Press*.

NEWS SOURCES IN ELKO (AND MY M. O.)

What kind of special techniques are there in covering livestock events as a newspaperman? I don’t know. Just have to ask somebody who knows what he’s talking about, I think. [Laughs] Usually—of course, you had a basic idea, I guess, but it wasn’t necessary to be an expert, because when you represent a newspaper and you’re a newspaper reporter, you ask an expert because you’re going to quote him anyway. So, we would have, for instance, Joe Wilson, who was then the county agent, was a specialist in livestock, and Mark Menke, his assistant at that time, and later county agent for many, many years, had particularly to do with the flora. And of course, both of them were very active in getting ranchers and so on, to submit the displays and all that sort of business. And Joe Wilson, of course, was a livestock expert. And I would just keep my eye on Joe. And he’d say, “Well, the 4-H blue ribbon animal is right there.” You know, they looked almost square [gestures and laughs].

And I’d merely ask Joe why that particular animal over the one from some other farm or ranch in Elko.

He’d say, “Well, it’s conformation is so and so—”

And I’d say, “Oh, conformation,” to start with, you know. And then describe, generally, why this animal was a winner, blue ribbon winner. But, really, I never knew anything about stock or stock judging or what. They all looked the same to me. And I’m sure they would to almost anyone, except those who study them and know all about it. Besides, the

next day the fair's over, and you have to, you know, be an expert on something else. So you ask an expert, before you become an expert [laughs]. But, if you have a good memory, and take legible notes, you don't get into too much trouble. I'm sorry, but I can't [laughs], I can't claim any expertise in the field of livestock just because I was a reporter in one of the great livestock counties of the United States. In fact, Elko, when I was there and perhaps this is still true, had the second greatest number of cattle of any county in the United States, next to Cherry County, Nebraska, which had more because it was a feeder lot situation, I think, and that sort of thing, more than just out on the range. But, of course, Elko being, how many? eleven million acres?—there's lots of room for cattle to wander about on and get a mouthful of food.

Otherwise, I think maybe as far as social life was concerned, generally, other than, say a rodeo and fair, which of course, are established things, the social life in Elko centered mostly about the Commercial Hotel back in those days. Commercial, and to some extent the Mayer which later became the Stockmen's (and which burned down, and then became the new Stockmen's). But, I think, mostly the Commercial was a kind of a center, as was, of course, the Elks Club in those days. And I got my first (of very little in its entirety for that matter), but my first acting experience when the Lions Club put on *The Drunkard*, in the Elks Club in Elko.

It was a very interesting experience. I went up, Gwen and I went up there for the tryouts, which were conducted by R. R. Jones, who was a dramatics teacher at Elko High School. And so he gave us all the parts to read, of course, the same as in any other play. And after we read two or three parts, all the people who'd come to try out, why, Mr. Jones (R. R. Jones) said, "We'll use you for the

villain," pointing at Leonard. So that became my acting experience, and I was the villain in *The Drunkard*. And it was really quite an experience, too. The Elks had a big hall, and they just sectioned off one corner of it, and built a small stage, with access of course, and the wings. Of course, you didn't need much. And then they served beer, as they always do at *The Drunkard*, you know, wherever it's shown, for over how many years. I think we had it on for about three or four nights. And Gwen took the part of Agnes, who I think was a nut—you know, a girl out of her mind. (Sometimes—well, let's not go into that [laughs]. Whoops, she heard.) Others in this case, incidentally, included Orville Wilson, who was one of the leading attorneys in Elko, now retired and living in Medford, Oregon, his home town—where he grew up. C. B. Tapscott, whom I mentioned just before, took the

The cast also included Bud Williams, who is now a very prominent Reno dentist. And the hero was Don Parent, who was a teacher at the Elko high school, but who's long since left this area, I believe. I can't recall the name of the heroine. All I remember is standing over her, and saying, something about, "Now I have you in my power, me proud beauty," [laughs]. It was fun, fun, probably awful, but it was fun. That and a couple of things in little theater, are about all I ever did—Reno Little Theater.

The news sources, while I was with the *Free Press*, some were colorful and some interesting. Perhaps one of the most colorful was the district attorney, Doug Castle, whose father was also a prominent Elko attorney. Doug was very, very sharp and a very good district attorney. And we were not only professional friends, but friends in the evening. Before I was married, I ran around with Doug and his wife Babe. Their long nights of hilarity, however, eventually got the better

of Doug, and he wound up very ill—and had, I think, a stroke, and so on; and died a good many years ago. But, he was really a character as well as a good professional man during the time that he was the district attorney. My recollection is that, he was succeeded in the district attorney's office (which of course, was always a key news source in Elko) [by] C. B. Tapscott, who later became an assistant attorney general. In fact, in quite later years, is now practicing law, in Reno.

Otherwise, of course, the district judge then was James Dysart. And Mr. Castle, Doug's father, also, of course, although he was in private practice there, but had been either judge or district attorney—can't remember. The sheriff, when I went to Elko, was Charles Harper, and under sheriff was Bill Guidici. They, of course, were contacts, and whenever there was a— Well, I made regular calls there, of course, at the court house. And naturally, they were the sources for the bigger stories, such as the one concerning Luther Jones, and the murder of the cattlemen. And they were always very cooperative. I don't recall ever having any real difficulties with them, which is pretty rare in the newspaper business. You usually, at one time or another, have a confrontation with a news source, because they want to keep something under their hat, and you want the public to know about it. But, I always got on well with them, I think.

Then, also, there was city governments which was—I can't even remember where the city hall was [laughs] at that time. And I can't remember—let me see, who was the mayor? Of course! Dave Dotta was the mayor, and was mayor for practically all the six years—in fact, I guess all the Six years that I was in Elko—that is, that I was in Elko working for the paper. Dave was a very, very fine man. He lived many, many years after he was no longer in the city affairs, he continued to live in Elko,

and I think died just a couple of years ago. It wasn't very long ago. I think Dave, although soft spoken and apparently rather a retiring type of man, was an excellent businessman and very well to do; and I think, probably took the businessmen's view of the operation of the city of Elko, and was much more of a leader than he appeared to be when you just chatted with him.

Other city figures. The city attorney, at that time of course, was just a part-time job, which some lawyer in town would sort of consent to do, rather than actually do, as sort of a civic duty. And that lasted through people such as Orville Wilson, who became the leading attorney in Elko (that is, through his seniority and so on), and who was a very, very brilliant man, and who did the city work—as I say—as they did then, sort of as a civic duty.

[What are the special techniques that I developed in talking to these political and law enforcement people to get them to give me the details of a story?] Well, the best way—. That's an interesting question. The best way—. The trouble with—trouble? One of the things about reporting—I've always found—especially in a town the size of Elko, is that you do not act as though you are a reporter. You may be in a terrible rush, but when you go in to talk to the mayor, to the district attorney, to the chairman of the county commissioners, for instance, or to the law enforcement men, I always found that the best way to approach them was with a joke, with what's happening in the World Series, with *anything* that had *nothing* to do with what you went in to talk to them about. The more you acted as though you had just dropped in to have a friendly chat, the more—the better your opportunity for getting the news.

If I would go in to see Charlie Harper, we might talk about fishing, for instance, or the hunting situation. And if I didn't know

anything about hunting (which I did not), I'd mention something to Sheriff Harper concerning hunting anyway, and he would then respond, and we would talk a little bit about the hunting, or tell an off-colored joke, or something like that. And then I'd say, "That reminds me, and what's ever happened to so and so? Have you gotten any further on that case?" And then he would tell me! And all this time you must just be itching to get out, because you still had to call on the district attorney, you had to call on somebody else, and you had to go see someone about an advertisement for the paper; something, anything of that sort, that really put you in the rush, but you never could act as though you were being rushed. I don't know whether that's a—. That's obviously, I think, an old technique of reporters. There's nothing new about it [laughs]. And I'm sure it's practiced whether you're in Elko or Chicago, on a newspaper. And I know that it's so in Reno, too. That's the basic technique, of course, to get the news out of them. Once in a while, of course, they're reticent, and you just have to press them. But as far as Elko's concerned, I didn't have a great deal of trouble there. Perhaps I didn't get the news right now, but if I didn't, why I would get it the next day for sure. And so the people would be informed whatever the story was. There wasn't quite the "hurry up and get the news" that there is in the larger papers, such as in Reno.

What kind of a philosophical approach did I have to these news stories? Well, some people will say, you just had to report it straight. Some people will insist that there's got to be some kind of a twist at the end. Or some people will say, you have to have an adversary situation in the paper in order to make the news interesting. And this being my first reporting on a professional basis, I thought maybe I'd discuss that. Well, the idea that you

have to have an adversary situation—that may make it a little more interesting, but I don't think it's at all necessary. Individual profiles, as it were, of people in the community, can often be very interesting, especially if you have a news twist to hang it on. That is you have an ongoing story, and you can interview in a sort of a profile manner in that way. And so you don't necessarily have to have an adversary situation. I think, in fact, that that sort of thing (that and this "interpretive" reporting) in those days, was not unheard of, but almost unheard of. You reported the news as it was told to you. And you did not presume, at the age of twenty-three years old, to know better than what the person was that you were reporting, and therefore throw in your own ideas, which basically is what interpretive (or interpretative sometimes called) reporting is. And it always gives me a chuckle when, these days, this subject comes up, and latter days when some youngster's sitting at a typewriter presumes that he can handle the situation and puts in editorial comment, in effect, that supersedes that of some expert in the field even. It seems to me, sometimes they try that. And I've never thought that someone fresh out of journalism school was really competent, to do that. I certainly didn't think *I* was. And so I gathered the news as best I could, and reported it as accurately as I could without presuming to enter myself into the news situation. I know that sounds old hat now, and sniffed at [laughs] I guess.

Well, of course, I got the basics of that in studying journalism at the University of Nevada. I already knew, basically, how to write a news story, when a news story was to be written straight, and when it was to be written with a twist, say something with humor in it, or perhaps tragedy and that sort of thing. Now, that's not the same as interpreting, either [laughs]. That's a different situation. But, of

course, you just have to know those things, and how to treat a certain story.

I had an interview with the mayor, right after I'd gotten there; and the mosquitoes were getting bad down by the river in Elko. And I remember this was the first funny or "bright" that I had written. And so I quoted the mayor, who made a few remarks about it. And in quoting him, the story was funny in itself because the mayor and I were down—we'd gone down the river, I guess, and the mayor was slapping at mosquitoes at the time that we were talking. This is just a little "bright," but, it was, of course, completely different than you usually hear from the mayor. But, the only way to write a news story is to get the facts first, and then put them down, and you automatically know in doing that, how to build a story. That's so long ago, I guess, that I—.

Of course, you mentioned something about this developing into something else, and that did eventually, of course, I became—as the editor, of course, I also wrote the editorials for the *Nevada State Journal* years later.

And there of course, you have an entirely different approach, naturally. Because you tell people there how the city oughta be run. None of them, really, are as expert as you [laughs]. So. But, that's an entirely different matter. And that's the traditional division between editorial comment, which can be made by a columnist or such, on a newspaper, as long as it's identified that way; then, it's permissible because the reader says, "Oh. Well, that's what that character thinks. He's off his base a country mile." That's fine as long as he knows that in the paper. Otherwise, the news— and there's always exceptions, I suppose—but generally the news otherwise should be objective. The columning, incidentally, or my editorial writing, I guess, had its beginnings not too long after I was on the *Free Press*,

perhaps after I'd been there a year or two and knew the town fairly well. The editor asked me if I would write a week end column on Saturdays—I think it came out Saturday—on little things that I'd picked up or heard about, and some that had no—had insufficient news value to actually be a news story in the paper. So that's when I started to—basically, the "first editorials," and you'd have to put that in quotation marks, because this was usually sort of humorous, semi-humorous, or something that was really inconsequential, but that quite a few people might like to read. I called that "Thirty for the Week." And that was the first time that I had ever written any comment, as it were, without any substantiation, and that only partly.

Then I really didn't do any of that sort of thing again. Of course, after I left the *Free Press* and came to Reno, I went back to straight reporting, and didn't write editorialized material until I had been on the *Gazette* for quite a spell. And then John Sanford went on vacation, and I took over the editorial writing, and I had to, whether I liked it or not. And so I began writing editorials then, for the *Gazette*, which was a little difficult for me since I was a lifelong Democrat, and John Sanford—. But, that basically, is where I started, was on the *Free Press*. I did do it enough to get the idea.

How about some further character sketches here and descriptions of these people that I contacted. Let's see. The district attorney [Doug Castle] I did, I guess, a little bit. He himself—Doug was a very intelligent fellow, and one of those people that others in town, at the outset, saw as a possible holder of higher office, even in the state, and that sort of thing. And of course, as we all know, this has happened to a great many younger men over the years in which they get caught up in having a drinking problem. I guess that's mostly about it, too. Some of them, of course,

go on to other things that stop them. In those days, of course, another thing that would hold them back (although I can't remember any) would be women. But, Doug was so alert, very good after-dinner type speaker. He was humorous. He could play the guitar; had basically a happy-go-lucky attitude toward things, but, nevertheless, in those days—as nearly as I could tell—took very good care of his job; and was an excellent news source, as far as news was concerned, because he knew what news was, could put the proper twist on it, and generally was highly, pretty highly motivated behind all this, I think, until he started going downhill.

Sheriff Harper was likewise. He was *not* a taciturn man at all, but a very congenial type fellow, and had a big smile on his face whenever you came in, and acted always as though you were the person that he most wanted to see that day. And he still does. The last time I saw him was just a few years ago. He's long since gone into other endeavors, of course.

Well, Judge Dysart was pretty much—. My recollections of him are not too great. But he was pretty—a very serious—he was sort of a judge-type judge. [Laughs] He was very conservative in his approach. But, of course, you didn't really interview Judge Dysart very much, judges not being the kind that go ahead and tell anything ahead of time, and that sort of thing, they're tryin' to find out what's going on. So I really [didn't] have a great deal of contact with Judge Dysart. Chris Sheerin, perhaps, did much more so.

He [Chris Sheerin] had been there a good many years by the time I joined the *Free Press*, and was extremely well known in town. And if there were any difficulties over getting news, and one thing or another, Chris could usually straighten it out by calling up and having a little chat with the person. Chris,

of course, later became known as "Mr. Elko." And in those days, he knew a great deal about everything that was going on about town anyhow, and had established a rapport with all of the citizens who had to do with the news; and a good many others, of course, who didn't. So he, perhaps even in most of the time, or a great deal of the time that I was in Elko, Chris, being the editor, was the head man and the man who kept things moving as far as getting news was concerned. He certainly did it the first— anyway, the first year.

There's one way in the newspaper, I guess, that is possibly pertinent. There's one way in the newspaper business to really get into it, and that's to *have to*. I presume that's true in any situation of that kind. But, I had been on the paper—I think I joined it about the middle of May—and after about two weeks on the paper, perhaps, or something like that, Chris came by to my desk, and he said, "Well, Paul, I'm gonna take two weeks vacation." On the *Free Press*, of course, that meant that you did it all [chuckles], not just your little reportorial duties. And I [laughs] sort of gaped, and there I'd been there two weeks, and he was gonna just dump the paper right in my lap, as it were. And I was gonna get the whole paper out, and hell, the whole thing. And he just took off on his two weeks vacation, and left me there. Bang! So I managed. But it scared the life out of me, of course, and that was very good for me, because it gave me the responsibility that, I suppose, at least no other way, subconsciously, that I would have in the future.

Oh, Mark [Menke] in Elko, of course, which is so primarily agricultural, the office of the county extension agent was an extremely good news source. All the ranchers were subscribers, and they all wanted to read about situations locally, as far as the cattle and the feed, and how it was raised, and all this sort of

thing that extension office was—. And it was located, incidentally, in the federal building or post office in Elko, in the basement. And Mark Menke, of course, in connection with all the, oh what, all kinds of—. Mark always had some theory about something, and so you could quote him, and so you had a local news story according to Mark Menke. And he was a tremendous, say, botanist?—or whatever. I guess that would be horticulturist. I think that'd be better, I guess, horticulturist, and was always looking for something that would help the production of cattle, through feed and so on, and through planning; and also would help the ranchers out at, oh, I suppose things like the kind of trees to plant for a shelter belt, or something like that at ranches. And, Mark was not only brilliant at this (I would say, or almost), he also knew how to tell it in simple, simpler form, and he stayed away from the Latin [laughs] when it came to giving me a news story. And so, of course, Mark and I became very, very good friends. Mark was from Reno, of course, and his folks, his family owned the property where the big shopping center is down on Plumb Lane, which one—?

They owned the property where the big—was part of the, or at least the Menke ranch was part of Park Lane shopping center; and had a brother here. I think it was a brother, Blaine Menke, who was a doctor. So Mark was from an old Reno family; and of course, I'd lived here a long time, and that made for a good rapport between Mark and me, too, to start with. And then as far as the cattle, itself was concerned, that was the field for Joe Wilson, who was the county extension agent at that time, Mark being assistant. Joe was very good, but quite verbose and hard to get around to [laughs] the point, because he'd get wrapped up in descriptions and so on, concerning the conditions of cattle, and one thing or another. And it'd be kind of difficult

to sort out the news from the conversation. But he was very cooperative, really, Joe was also. And so, that was a good source for picking up the news of ranching, and growing, and so on, in Elko County.

Otherwise, of course, some of the lawyers, who were always, naturally, coming into the news, besides Doug Castle, and C. B. Tapscott, there was Orville Wilson. And of course, the then senior, oh I guess, the senior lawyer in Elko was Milton B. Badt, and he later, of course, became justice of the state supreme court. Probably as brilliant a man as there'd ever been in the state of Nevada, I think, really.

Orville Wilson was a contemporary of mine. We came there very nearly at the same time. He might have preceded me, but only very, very shortly. And he worked for the Elko-Lamoille Power Company for a time after—he'd graduated from Oregon law school, and worked for the Elko-Lamoille Power Company, while he was waiting to be admitted to his examinations, and so on; and when he became associated with Milton Badt, which eventually became the firm of Badt and Wilson in Elko. And Orville Wilson remains one of my best friends today. But, he was a man who had equal brilliance with—the most (well, perhaps did eventually) knowledge of the law, et cetera in Elko, and particularly in land law. Orville Wilson, during his years—he's now retired and lives in Medford, Oregon—but up until his retirement, was probably recognized as one of the best lawyers in the field of land; fighting the BLM for the big ranchers of which Wilson had many large ranchers for clients.

And then of course, when Judge Badt later became district judge, and then was appointed to the supreme court, and of course, during those years, why then, Orville Wilson took over all of that business as far as that firm was concerned then, was as I say, I guess, about

preeminent in the field of laws that concern battling the BLM, and the Forest Service, and all those people for private businessmen, private ranchers.

Orville was an outstanding man in many other ways; a tremendous conversationalist, with an excellent sense of humor, an excellent athlete—played football for College of Oregon, or whatever it was called in Medford, and in his early days, as a youngster, as a college boy, college man. He was also, besides being a very fine athlete and conversationalist and so on, he was—what else did I have in mind about Orville? Oh, he was very interested in politics also, but not from a seeking office point of view, but behind the scenes. And he was a Republican central committee chairman, and all that sort of thing in Elko. At one time there was some mention about Orville running for governor in the Republican party. Of course, he would've made an excellent governor. But he never had any desire to do that sort of thing, and so he always remained in the background, and did a great deal of work for his party, but never ran for public office. The only thing that I know that he ran for, I think I mentioned previously; he was a city attorney for a while which he performed as a kind of a civic duty.

Well, he and Mr. Badt got along very well. Very, very well. Milton Badt didn't make any mistake in bringing Orville into the partnership with him. I guess it was a partnership, or at least they had offices together, and they were under the firm, the name of Badt and Wilson.

Incidentally, Orville's son, then, in later years, went to law school, [Stewart] Wilson. And he has now taken over the practice, along with the Wilson's son-in-law, Rich Barrows.

One of the great characters, I think, in Elko's history, was Joe MacNamara, who is long gone, but with whom I had a friendly

relationship. But "Joe Mac," as he was always known, was quite high in the community endeavors, and was a tremendous attorney, particularly a tremendous trial attorney, and defended, I don't know how many people, all of whom probably—practically all of whom [laughs] (so that word would go in Elko if you asked these days of the old-timers), whenever anyone was in a real tough spot, caught 'im over the body with a gun in his hand, and the gun's still smoking, would go get Joe Mac, and [laughs] that's kind of figuratively put. That was about it. And when they did, they'd say, "Well, he got Joe Mac to represent him, so I suppose the so-and-so will go free." And more often than not, Joe was able to do this. He was a kind of generation of lawyers that, I guess, is pretty much gone now, at least the small town lawyer with a brilliant mind, and a twist that—. Well, you might say that in a certain way Joe could always figure out some way that nobody else had thought of, to show that his client was not guilty. sort of as though, nowadays in the big time, for instance F. Lee Bailey, or someone of that caliber is now, in a sense.

But I was not too well acquainted with Joe. Once in a while, I'd see him in a bar. It's not hard to see Joe in the bar. (He had a little bit of the same problem, I think, that Doug Castle did. And eventually, of course, it also got him.) His sister, Mae MacNamara, was a sharp, steel-willed woman, who became postmaster of Elko, and served there, in that position for many, many years. I think retired before she died. I've forgotten. But, she was also brilliant, and also very active politically. And, of course, I guess it was, Mae Mac was probably a Pat McCarran appointee. (I've forgotten, but I think so.) But it certainly wasn't an appointment that was just given to someone who didn't know what they were doing. Mae Mac may not have known about

the postal department, but it wasn't very long after she was in there, until she knew about it—all about it—and was really running the post office. She was always highly interesting to talk to, because she always had an opinion, and a strong one on everything—and politics and so on. She was a fine example, I guess, of what all the women are looking out for today, and that is, a woman administrator who was really a— who actually was appointed to a high post over men, and that sort of thing, back—where are we '35?

I can't think of anyone else particularly, as far as interviewing, except perhaps—Senator Robbins. Well, now Senator Robbins was a very particular friend of Chris Sheerin's. And, Senator Robbins, I knew about Senator Robbins and how influential he was in Elko, and how influential, of course, in the state, when he was probably the preeminent senator when there was one senator from each county. And Senator Robbins threw his weight around, I think, more over in the legislature, than he did in Elko. In Elko itself, my recollection is that he attended to his law business, which was considerable, and if he talked politics it was (that is, in Elko) with people with whom I did not have a great deal of contact. So, about, all I know about Senator Robbins really, was that we always spoke very jovially on the street. I might've interviewed him, but I can't remember. Of course, Senator Robbins was—had also been a drinking man, and he conquered that, however, unlike some of the others. He just simply one day, he just said, "No more." And from that time on, he never drank again, as to my recollection. Of course, it wasn't too late for Senator Robbins, so he went on; lived a very fruitful life, and a very, very important one as far as the state of Nevada's concerned. He was so powerful, I guess, at one time, that [chuckles] he might've been unpopular with his popularity—with his

influence in the legislature. But, to talk about his character, and his activities either in the law, or otherwise, specifically, I'm not very competent to do that, because I didn't know him well enough.

CELEBRITIES COME TO THE COMMERCIAL HOTEL

A matter of reporting—it was one phase of Elko's life which lasted a very—through perhaps only a couple, three years; it was very interesting, and made for interesting reporting, was the decision of Newt Crumley, Jr. with the concurrence, of course, of his father, to bring big time entertainment to Elko. Well, I went to the hotel one day, and I don't know whether I talked with Newt directly, or with—might've been his manager, Pete Walters, now a very well-known Reno realtor. But, Pete was then manager, or assistant manager of the Commercial Hotel. And it may've been him, or as I said, it might've been Newt. But anyway, I learned through them that they were going to bring Ted Lewis and his band and floor show to Elko. And this followed the construction next door to the Commercial, of an annex which had a big room, and would accommodate enough people to do this. Previously, Newt, Jr. had brought a single act in, that had no—I mean she wasn't—it was just an ordinary entertainer whom he hired. And this gave him the idea of "Well, if people won't"—and I guess perhaps he didn't have a very big crowd for this—so he thought, "Well, I'll show 'em. I'll get them a big crowd!" (I guess, this was Newt's thinking; I'm just sort of projecting my idea of what he thought.) But, anyway, he eventually did book Ted Lewis and his band—his "shadow," as he called him, who was a young black. This, I believe, would've been in 1939, I think— somewhere in there.

And of course, this booking of Ted Lewis made quite a big news story, and really shook the town; and everybody said, “What is that Newt Crumley thinking of? He’ll bankrupt himself and his father, paying somebody like Ted Lewis to come in.

Of course, I don’t know whether you remember, but Ted Lewis had a name as big in the entertainment world then as, oh, Dean Martin does now? Something like that? And not only that, but it wasn’t just a single; he was gonna bring the whole show, and he did. And Ted Lewis, of course, was a great gambler, and perhaps one of the reasons he signed up for this appearance. So, Lewis came, and of course, just absolutely *jammed* the Commercial showroom, this new showroom that, they’d just built with a hotel, some more rooms above it, incidentally. But it—every night, it was just, you couldn’t get in, and wondered where all the people came from. Of course, Lewis was great with his top hat, and his “Is everybody happy?” and that sort of thing, which were Well, that was an expression you might use somewhere, say, “Is everybody happy?” if you were at a party or somethin’, and just wanted to—and that automatically meant oh, Ted Lewis came to mind. Well, that would be something like Archie Bunker might’ve said now in order [laughs]—. So, that was such a success that—and I don’t know about a financial success, but it was certainly drawing people to the Commercial Hotel. Ted Lewis, of course, I mentioned a moment ago, was a terrific gambler; and while he was there, I guess he went several thousand dollars into debt, personally. So they paid him off with a promise that he would come back again and pay that of f, and so they got Ted Lewis twice actually; once for nothing. This was the report, at least, that went around [chuckles]. And of course, Lewis was around the hotel, and just a big hit, personally, besides, because of course, he knew

show biz and how to promote himself. That sort of started off the big time entertainment.

And I can’t remember the sequence of those who came—whom Newt booked afterward. But, the names I can remember most of them, all of whom I, or nearly all (I guess) of whom I interviewed; and these included Ray Noble and his orchestra. Ray Noble was a Britisher; and at that time was one of the leading big bands in the United States; he was making a great hit all over the United States. It would be, perhaps not quite, but something like the Beatles, in a later day as far as popularity was concerned, when they came over here.

And then besides Ray Noble, I remember one Christmas season (I suppose this would’ve been Christmas of ’39 or ’40), Chico Marx was booked. And I’ll never forget—I interviewed Chico Marx in the lobby of the Commercial, in the evening, with the snow just coming down. He had just arrived in town, and he was gonna open the next night, I guess. He was a very interesting man. Can’t remember what the interview was about particularly, I’ll have to look it up, you know—but went into his background and the background of the four Marx brothers, and some of the things they had done; and a little bit about Harpo, and a little bit about Groucho, and a little bit about Zeppo. But I think Chico, at that time, was very—. He was, of course, as everyone of our age knows, the member of the four Marx brothers that played the piano, so rapidly and would finish up high on the keyboard with a finger pointing into one of the keys [gesture]. Bang! And that’s the way he would start it [chuckles].

And then beside Chico Marx, Ray Noble, Ted Lewis, there was Sophie Tucker, who was, in those days—who’d be her counterpart now? Bailey? Maybe someone like that. Sophie Tucker was a great draw, and a great character

apparently. I've forgotten when I interviewed her. But, of course, I wrote and covered these floor shows on the first night, and all that sort of thing.

Let's see. And of course the greatest, probably the most famous name of all, appeared at Elko during Fair time about 1940, I guess, was Paul Whiteman, the king of jazz, who was just absolutely preeminent in the musical field. And, when they announced [chuckles], after Ted Lewis, and perhaps another one or two, that Paul Whiteman was coming, it was not only disbelieving in Elko to have Paul Whiteman come with his floor show—I got a telegram from Abel Greene, the editor of *Variety*, saying, "Understand Whiteman signed Commercial Hotel. Please send story," or something. And that was my first contact with Abel Greene, who was the editor of *Variety* for years, and years, and years, and years. Maybe he still is. I'm not sure. So anyway, my deathless prose appeared on page one of *Variety*. I sent the story about Paul Whiteman and all. And, of course, in *Variety's* headlines, it said something about "Whiteman Goes to Stix," or something along that line, and it was on page one of *Variety*, and not having been in the business very long, it was really quite a thrill [laughs] to hit the front page of *Variety*.

Whiteman, of course, was a big, hefty fellow with a little moustache, and he was very easily done in caricature, because all you had to do was draw a round thing like this [gesture], and something like that, and that was Paul Whiteman, and anybody would recognize him if you had any ability at all at that sort of thing. But, he had a great, Lincoln Continental—that is, that would be the old Lincoln Continentals. The top came down; so he loaned that, as well as himself, and led the parade for the Elko County Fair. He too, was a great hit.

What do I suppose that Mr. Crumley did besides to offer these people money to get 'em to come to Elko? Well, that's all you had to do if you'd find the date. But, after he once got Ted Lewis, you see, then he had something to go on. Now how he arranged that originally, I'm not sure. But, as I say, he had had maybe, one or possibly two other non-name acts, whom he had bought from MCA, I think—Music Corporation of America. And it was their representative in the west, I suppose, said—it might've even started out as a joke as far as Ted Lewis was concerned; say, "I can't offer you so and so, but gosh Newt, I can give you Ted Lewis. Ha, ha, ha." Well, Newt took him up, I guess. That may have been what happened. Who knows. I can't remember now what it was. Mrs. Crumley might be able to [laughs] let you know about that. Talk to her. That would be very, very interesting.

But beside, now let's see. Ted Lewis, Ray Noble, Sophie Tucker, Chico Marx, Paul Whiteman. Also semi-type big names, the Murtaugh Sisters, were a group of singers something like the Andrews Sisters, and really every bit as good, as the Andrews Sisters ever were. And Jon and Sandra Steele, who were great favorites of the Crumleys themselves, and of Elko as a whole, even though they were not quite the big names that Newt had had in the other field. But Jon and Sandra Steele came back several times.

In any event, it seems that when people think of entertainment now, they think of Las Vegas first, and Reno/Tahoe second, and they're just sure that—they would just say, "Well, Vegas started the big time entertainment," or they might say, "Well, maybe it started in Reno, and then Vegas grew up and took it away or something." Where as a matter of fact, big time entertainment started in Elko in the late '30s.

I don't remember any more of the entertainers, especially in the big names. There was one other, a men's group, sort of along the Murtaugh Sisters, a quartet of men that was pretty semi-famous at the time, too. I just can't remember—. But they were made popular on a record, "Jingle, Jangle, Jingle, only too glad you're single"—whatever that song is, you know. And I tried to think of that earlier, and I just couldn't remember. Kind of immaterial really, in a way.

But anyway, I suppose with the threat of war and that sort of thing coming along about 1941 (I guess it would be that) why, of course, [they] abandoned the big name entertainment, and maybe it was draining the hotel's resources, too. I don't know. So the Crumleys gave it up. And then, of course, it was revived again in about 1946, seven, eight, somewhere in there, when the Stockmen's Hotel was purchased by Red Ellis. And it had a showroom also when he rebuilt the old Mayer Hotel into the Stockmen's Hotel. And the showroom didn't hold, gosh, I guess you couldn't get 150 people in there. (Maybe, I don't know [laughs] maybe less. I should remember since I used to fill it up with patrons.) But Red Ellis was great competition, and Newt Crumley was not one to ignore competition, and so the big time came back to Elko. And Newt would get a big name; and Red would get a big name, and they'd try to figure out how they could get at someone coming up. Usually Red did. For instance, a prime example is Tennessee Ernie Ford. Red booked with a man up in the Pacific Northwest, among others, and this fellow said on the phone one day (and I may have taken this call when I was manager at the Stockmen's)—but in any event, this booker said, "Well, Red, I got a man here. I see Newt is going to have—" (I think this is the way it went—a famous Latin music leader) "Xavier

Cugat. I got a single here that I think might just be competition for Cugat."

Red said, "What's his name?"

He said, "Well, his name is Ford, Ernie Ford. Calls himself Tennessee Ernie Ford." And he said, "Believe me, he's really got it."

"How much would it be?" I suppose it was two, or three thousand dollars for a week [laughs], you know. I'm not sure, but somewhere in that vicinity.

Red said, "Well, it's a lot of money, but I don't know who else we can get, and Newt's gonna have this Cugat. So sign him on." So he gave him the dates, and I guess this was Fair time. I'm not sure now. So Tennessee Ernie Ford came to the Stockmen's then. He gave Newt plenty of competition with Xavier Cugat. (If that's the way it went; it may have been the other way around [laughs]. I'm not sure. You know, maybe Red got this Ford, and then Newt went out and got Cugat. I can't remember that.)

And people, here they were having things that they'd have to go hundreds of miles to see. There was nothing like it much even—even by *then*, in Reno, or perhaps in Vegas. I don't know when the big time really got under way in Vegas, but somewhere during that period in Reno. But this would've been—I'm talking as far as Ford and Cugat—that would be 1949 or '50, I guess, somewhere in there. About then. And there were other big names [that] came to Elko, too, then, but that was a later matter. And by that time, why Reno and Vegas were both in the swim, and so it wasn't quite the startling thing that it was back in the days when Paul Whiteman, and Ted Lewis, and Sophie Tucker were there, and Chico Marx.

But anyway, they were fun to report on, too. Made it very interesting; write reviews of it, and write their arrival in town, and all this sort of thing, you know. Go see 'em, and talk to all these big names as kind of a cub reporter.

I'd still only been there, perhaps, three years, you know, two, three years.

PRODUCTION OF THE ELKO DAILY FREE PRESS

Otherwise, as far as the newspaper itself was concerned, the production of the paper was kind of interesting. I think, let's see, we had two linotypes. The press was in the basement. And when you made up the pages—the whole pages, which, of course, were made up in type and ran directly on the press, in those days—you had to carry the pages, the heavy, lead pages down and put them on the press. They had to carry them downstairs, down a steep set of stairs [laughs]. Once they had what they call a doubletruck, which they had to carry (a double truck is a double, of course, page of a big advertisement, with a jillion little tiny squares and so on in it)—as they got down to the bottom of the stairs, it sagged [laughs] right in the middle. And if it had dropped, of course, the paper'd been two days late, trying to get to redo this ad. But it just sagged down [gesture] in the middle like this, but they eventually carefully tilted it up and got it on to the press bed before [laughs] all the type fell out.

But there were two linotypes. One of the printers was Earl Frantzen, who is now co-owner of the *Elko Daily Free Press* with Melvin Steninger. Melvin, then, was just a boy, I guess. And Eber Steninger was in the back shop. The paper then, was owned principally by E. M. Steninger when I first went there in '36, and either then or later, or just previously, had sold a bit of it each to his son and to Chris Sheerin. And eventually, they wound up with the ownership then, and eventually sold to Melvin and Frantzen.

The paper's production, well, particularly the news was handled in what must seem

these days to be an absolutely ancient manner. The national news, the foreign news, and the Nevada news came to the *Free Press* as it did to several other papers in the state, small papers (*Humboldt Star*, *Ely Daily Times*, and so on I guess), came from the United Press, and came via telegram, Western Union telegram. And the Western Union was just down around the corner on Railroad Street, at that time in Elko, so it was a short trip. But the telegram would come in short form, just as though you send a telegram, with all the "the's," the "a's," and so on, left out. And each morning you'd wait for this telegram, and it would be the latest news done in very, very digested form, and which you had to interpret [laughs] what it meant almost, to write a story that sounded legible for the paper. But you'd sit down with a telegram, and expand it, and write what it said essentially.

Those were the days, incidentally, about the time when Franco was on the march and so on. And that was one of the big stories that I do remember. And the "fifth column" had begun operations in the city.

But the news would come that way, as far as the non-local news was concerned. The state, national and international news came on a telegram sent from Reno by the United Press correspondent in Reno.

And then, the *Journal*, the *Nevada State Journal* would come, and if you had a particularly good story (and they only sent you that many lines, just a few, comparatively few lines on the latest news that happened that morning), you'd pick up the background for the Elko readers; you'd clip out what the *Journal* said, depending upon the situation, and use that for the background. So you'd stretch your story, the story, out. For instance, if Franco had taken Madrid [laughs], it would hardly do to just have it in two paragraphs. So you'd pick up the background in the *Journal*,

in which perhaps it would say, “Franco entering Madrid,” or on the march, and so on. But you could pick up the background, and make a nice, big long story out of it for the *Free Press*.

Locally, of course, you gathered the news just as you do in bigger towns—that is, not too big, but fairly big towns. You went out, the reporter went out and did it himself. And Chris Sheerin and I were the reporter staff. The stenographer and bookkeeper was the women’s editor. And that was about it. Mr. Steninger would write an editorial once in a while before he became inactive in the paper, and it usually made half the community mad [laughs]. And, of course, you could usually shoot it full of holes, which of course Chris Sheerin knew. Chris was a very, very good editor, and good writer, but he was not one who lambasted anybody, and so [laughs] it used to hurt him greatly to have Mr. Steninger just jump all over some person for something either in Elko, or within the state, or give the governor a bad time, or something like that. But, it was a very interesting few years there. Six years I was with the *Free Press*.

OTHER WRITERS; OTHER PAPERS

When I first arrived in Elko, our competition was a three-times-a-week newspaper, the *Elko Independent*, which was, I guess, older, actually, than the *Free Press*, but the *Free Press* was daily, six days a week. previously, they had a working arrangement; the ownership of the *Independent* published Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and the *Elko Free Press*, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. That made it very nice, because it gave both papers an exclusive day. But, by the time I had arrived, the *Free Press* had gone daily, and the *Independent* was still three times a week. Shortly after my arrival, I think in

1937, Warren Monroe (long now a state senator, of course, and so on) bought the *Elko Independent*, and took it over and converted it to a weekly, so that the competition, which over the years had been very, very bitter, was, in a sense, nonexistent in Elko. When you have a six-day-a-week paper against a one-day-a-week, and against a weekly, of course, why once in a while—in fact, as often as he could, Warren “Snowy” Monroe would dig up somethin’ and sit on it and spring it at us, on his day of publication; and if we didn’t have it, why we felt like [laughs]—as though we had really missed the boat. And of course, he delighted in this, naturally.

So, there was a certain amount of competition, but by and large Snowy Monroe—very clever with words—would have special features, and he had a special column, and that sort of thing. And he’d come from Winnemucca where he’d worked for Rollin Stitser. But he had a natural, sardonic sense of humor (Warren Monroe did and *does*) , and made very good reading. You always enjoyed reading the *Independent*, even though you might say, “We should’ve had that story,” you know [laughs], that he would spring at us on his publication day, which I guess, was Thursday. But he did—Warren did very well with the *Independent*, over many—well, he just sold it, perhaps a year ago, or less I guess, just very recently, although he’s remained as the editor of it. He and his wife, Mary Monroe, former Mary Johnstone of a very prominent Winnemucca family (I see, incidentally, where her brother just died the other day, Don Johnstone), but they put the paper out with the help of one printer, who in late years was Max Wignall, and Max Wignall is now the actual owner of the *Independent*—Snowy having sold to him, but remained on. Mrs. Monroe, I know, is quite ill; has been for some time, but I haven’t heard lately. But they

operated the paper, and Mrs. Monroe, when Snowy was elected to the legislature—first, I guess an assemblyman, and then senator—but all during the legislature, Mrs. Monroe would get the paper out, unless Snowy had a chance to go back and write a column or something. And she produced—she was really the publisher during the legislature, and of course, got out the paper without any trouble at all. A very, very competent woman.

But competitively, of course, as I say wasn't really astonishing, and still isn't. The same situation exists today, of course. Steninger and Frantzen running the *Free Press*, and six days now, I think the *Free Press* is. Although it went back to five at one period, perhaps during the war; I've forgotten, and then stayed that way for some time. But the competition is—. I don't know, I don't think it's quite what it was, as far as getting the hard news is, even a weekly. Same situation exists, but the competition now is a little different.

Of course, Snowy Monroe's column has long been very popular. He used to refer to his fourteenth subscriber just having gotten on, but actually everybody read the *Independent* to read Snowy Monroe's column, which included politics; local politics, state politics; and of course his column is always watched very closely by the big papers in Vegas and Reno, because he is an influential senator, and writes a column, and therefore they pay more attention to him, actually, than they would another weekly columnist—with the possible exception of Jack McCloskey, whose column is also very much eyed by the bigger papers. (That's of course, the *Mineral County Independent*.)

Newspaper men in other counties, in other towns in Nevada were, some of them were very interesting, and one of them, of course, was Rollin Stitser, who had employed Snowy Monroe after he left the University

of Nevada. And Rollin Stitser was [chuckle] you might say, was really a character. He was, I guess about six-feet-three or four, and must've weighed two hundred and thirty, forty pounds, or something. He was a big, big man. And he was pretty big in the state scene, the Nevada State Press Association and so on; had quite a temper. His paper was very successful, even though it always looked, compared to the other smaller papers in Nevada, as though he hadn't spent much time getting the local news. But the *Humboldt Star* sold very, very well, was very successful, very successful paper. Mr. Stitser was inclined to be a little belligerent, especially after two or three drinks [laughs], and get wound up in a few barroom brawls and one thing another. But was a great supporter for Humboldt County and also a great supporter of Nevada State Press Association. And after his death, his wife Avery took over the paper, and was equally successful for a good many years, but eventually she sold it.

Then of course there's Paul Gardner, who ran the *Lovelock Review-Miner* for many years, and sold a few years ago, who was a highly opinionated editor, which is fine, I guess [laughs]; not always a favorite of other members of Nevada State Press Association, but Paul's a very interesting fellow, and I just talked to him not too many months ago at something or other, and he's very happily ensconced in Carson City now. I guess doing some writing' too. He's writing for John Miller or someone over there. Paul was also a very substantial backer of the State Press Association until at one point he got irritated about the big newspapers running the state press association—I guess this is basically the situation—and he organized a Small Newspapers Press Association in Nevada, which I guess had some backing for a time, but didn't last very long. There's

hardly room for the State Press Association, let alone another one. And that didn't seem to last, because I don't think that the other editors in the smaller papers were particularly antagonistic toward the big papers. The big papers, having actually, very actively supported Press Association and served in all the top offices and so on. So, the small newspaper dream that Paul had kind of got shot down.

Other editors, of course, included in Elko, before I was there, Jack Myles. Jack Myles was a high powered, natural advertising type fellow, who just went bang, bang, bang, bang everyday, and eventually, almost wore himself out, I guess. He was the editor of the *Elko Independent*, and left there to become editor of the *Ely Daily Times*; and left there and came back to Reno. And I sort of followed along behind Jack in those steps, you know, basically, except it might've been the other way around a little bit. But Jack was highly competent in the newspaper business, but even more so though as an advertising man. He was a great advertising and publicity man. In fact, he went down to Texas about—I guess for the campaign of—in the early sixties, and was goin' to represent a—. His reputation had become such that he had taken on this job in Texas to run the political campaign for a congressional candidate. And he was staying at the house of the congressional candidate, when he had an attack and died, which was a very untimely death.

Jack was really the spark plug that established the right-to-work law in the state of Nevada. And then he fought against its repeal, and it was turned down twice during his activities with the right-to-work committee [Nevada Citizens Committee]. Well, there were others that had higher offices in it, I guess, but Jack was always the— well, I guess paid, you know, by the people opposing

the repeal of right-to-work, always depended upon Jack to really get the word out. I recall once I wrote an editorial explaining—purely an explanatory editorial on the right-to-work law, and quoted Jack, and quoted anonymously (I guess) my brother who was a Sawmill Workers Union representative, my brother Waldo. I think I quoted them both just in explaining the two sides to the right-to-work situation and the next day, I got a call from—I guess I'd better turn that back. I wrote the editorial explaining it—that was it. And in this case, without siding with anyone, but just a kind of an explanatory thing, that's what happened. That was when I was on the *Gazette*. And when the *Gazette* came out, the next morning I got a call from my brother (that was it) who was a Sawmill Worker—. Oh, he just raked me down one side and down the other side. "What in the—. Can't you ever give anybody, any of us workers a break?" et cetera, et cetera.

And I said, "Gosh Waldo. I thought I'd just—. I didn't mean to, in this particular instance, to write anything for one side or the other."

Well, he was very, very irritated at me, and eventually he hung up. He had hardly hung up until I got a call from Jack Myles. Jack Myles, "What do you mean? I didn't know you wanted to side with the unions on *everything*," he said. So I figured this was one time I had really written a *balanced* editorial. I caught it from the unions, and caught it from the right-to-work committee [laughs].

A man, with whom I was not too closely connected, was almost a legend in the Nevada newspaper business, of course, was Claude Smith. The *Fallon Standard*. And, also, more or less along the same time, at least for some years, was Allen Dalby who was the editor of the *Fallon Eagle*. I think they're combined now *Eagle-Standard*. Claude Smith, of course,

among a jillion other jobs in getting out his paper, was also the correspondent from Fallon to the *Gazette*. But over the years he was a calm man, and a great judgment, and really one of the finest newspapermen—and *men*—in the state. He was a great fellow. And his paper was very widely read in those days; other newspapermen had subscriptions to the *Standard*, of course. He made a great success out of it. I was not really close to Claude Smith, because, even though I'd been born in Fallon, of course, I left there before he got the paper there, I guess. Some people who are—. Well, for instance, once he hired this apprentice whom he had sweeping the floor, and pounding the typewriter on occasion and so on, by the name of Rollan Melton, who is now the president of Speidel Newspapers. Claude was a great teacher, I think, too, a very calm and very patient type. He and his wife were both killed in an automobile accident. Actually they weren't. They stopped to help someone on the way to Fallon, down by the turnoff that takes you over into Carson City, the Y there. And he and Mrs. Smith started to cross to this other car, and a car coming down the highway went down and struck, and killed them both. That's, gee, fifteen years!

LIFE IN ELKO, NEVADA

Well, my first six years in Elko, from '36 to '42 I guess, the social strata in Elko was—I don't think that ethnically, to my recollection, with the possible exception, of course, of Blacks, that there were any exceptions but the two. There were, of course, in Elko, at the top of the social strata, (I guess you'd say) would be the top businessmen and lawyers and so on in Elko, and the ranchers, the surrounding ranchers were, of course, also when they came to town; they frequently were invited to parties in Elko, and likewise

Elko business people and professional people, were invited out to the ranches on occasion for big shindigs. But speaking of race, or that sort of thing, of course the Basques were a great influence in Elko, and were equally respected right along with the business people of the town, and some of them, of course were business people themselves in Elko. But my recollection there, ends about there; of course, that's thirty-five, forty years ago, so it's kind of vague in my memory.

The tourist industry, I think, was one of the things, of course, that Elko recognized, not only as a help then, but it was foreseen, of course, that eventually the tourist industry was going to be a very strong factor in Elko; whereas in the years just before my arrival, not too long before anyway, I think, the ranching was *the* number one thing. But as shown by the fact that we previously mentioned, for instance, Newton Crumley's floor shows and that sort of thing, were indicative of the fact that the tourist industry was becoming a factor in Elko's progress, and in its growth. I think, probably though, even today as far as Elko's concerned, that the ranching is still the number one economic prop for Elko. But with the growth and improvements in hotel facilities and so on through the years, and naturally with an improvement in the highways and all that sort of business, why, people from Salt Lake and environs, and from Idaho and so on, began to come in, not so much in the strictest sense of the word "tourist," but visitors from there helped, of course, in the economy a great deal.

Of course, as this went on there were—[laughs] I think I mentioned this before, that the accidents on the highway, as far as the newspaper is concerned, proved to be, well, a big source of news. There was always someone getting killed out there (as there still is) on the highway in the winter.

But, then of course, as Elko began to get a little bit larger and so on, the bus stops became a factor also, the stopping of the buses there. A bus would stop for perhaps half an hour—or longer than ordinarily they would, because the people would pile off the buses, especially the westbound buses coming out of Utah. Many of these people, of course, had never seen gambling, and this was their first chance when they hit Elko. The buses might've gone right through Wells. They didn't stop there, or they didn't stop at the state line for any great length of time. So it was their first—many, many people from the east, it was their first contact with wide-open gambling. And then they would have a ball in the half an hour, thirty-five minutes, or however long the bus stayed there. And the bus usually pulled right up beside the Commercial Hotel, and sat out there while people came in and got a sandwich and played the slot machines, and that sort of thing. Quite a boon to the Commercial Hotel, also. That was one of the sort of earlier signs of coming prosperity—additional prosperity to Elko. (Of course, as I said, the cattle were still a big thing. I think perhaps we mentioned this before, but Elko, of course, had more cattle than any other county in the United States, with one exception.)

But, as far as journalism was concerned in Elko, sometimes it was kind of difficult because of Elko's tremendous size—that is, the county. Something happened, we would frequently be late in getting the story, say of a tragedy or whatever, because it might've occurred way up on the Rim Rock or Jarbidge area, or something like that. And the word would have to come down through the sheriff's office, and the sheriff, whoever he might be, was not one in Elko [chuckles] to hurry up with giving anyone the news. And sometimes you'd have to hear about it from someone else, go to the sheriff and say,

“Say, did you have to send somebody up to Midas?” or wherever. “Understand there's been a shooting there,” or some other tragedy, or perhaps it might even be an alleged mine strike—although Elko never was one for great production of mines.

Gwen and I [laughs] once bought some shares in a mine from Gene Evans. (I think it was from Gene. That's odd, because he took my place at the *Free Press*. I don't exactly remember that, but anyway, somewhere in our effects we still have the certificate). And I think as far as mining goes, after Tuscarora was gone, why, there really hadn't been a great deal of mining there until Mountain City, of course, and the discovery of copper by S. Frank Hunt. Then, that of course developed; and was also helpful to Elko economically, I think, and also, usually provided some news for the newspaper—somethin' always goin' on, the shipments and so on. Stories that came from that—one of them I remember is quite an interesting thing—on the Mountain City copper strike.

The story was that there were two brothers, the David Sons; Walter Davidson, and—whatever his brother's name was. [Chuckles] I can't remember now. Operated a little store at Mountain City, and were just barely struggling along, and this prospector came in and said, “My name's Frank Hunt, and I've got some very good showing copper up here, and so I've incorporated and issued stock, and I've got the stock, but I don't have any money,” in effect was what he said. And so he asked the Davidson brothers if they would sell him supplies, and he would give them stock in lieu of cash. So they said, “Well, all right. We'll try it once.” So he stocked up, and peeled off all these several hundred shares of stock, which went, I think then, at ten cents. So the Davidsons took the stock, and pushed it in a drawer, and Hunt went on about his

business; and hired, I suppose, a couple of miners to help him dig, and go on down, because it looked better, and better, and better. But still, he wasn't getting any shipping out of it—shipping any ore out of it. So he came back again to the Davidsons. so they said, [laughs] "Well. All right, we'll do it again." So they did, and they shoved that sheaf of stock into the drawer on top of the other one, and they kept going—.

The way the story goes, this happened several times, till they had this great mass of stock, and then of course, Hunt really got into the copper lode or whatever. And bang!— the Mountain City. Then they started shipping the ore, and the stock went from ten cents to twenty-five cents to a dollar, to five dollars, up to, I've forgotten how much. And here they were, holding all this thousands upon thousands of shares. So eventually, when the stock reached a particular point up somewhere around fifteen, twenty-five dollars a share, or something like that, why the Davidson boys sold their stock, and both retired, and lived happily forever after. And it was quite an interesting thing. One of those times when stock certificates paid quite a lot better than the cash. Of course, there was, after the Mountain City Copper—yeah, Mountain City Copper Company is what it was called, I'm sure—after it got down into the depths, of course, why, news-wise it provided considerable— became an integral part of Elko County for several years. And of course, Mr. Hunt, as you know, went on and endowed the University of Nevada with mining scholarships, and that sort of thing.

Also there was tragedy there. I remember once, when Chris Sheerin, the editor, in fact, was on his vacation, or out of town or something, why four miners were asphyxiated in the bottom. I think it was four. It was quite a number. And as far as I know, though, that

was the only fatalities, but it, of course, was a big story. And I suppose that would be about '38, somewhere in there I guess.

As far as I was personally concerned in journalism, I think Mountain City Copper pretty much takes care of the mining situation. of course, later the Carlin gold came up, but I was long gone then.

I started to talk a little about the social stratification, and the fact that the ranchers were on top and the prominent businessmen. How did it work down? I don't know [laughs]. Mostly it was just the others [laughs], you know. And of course, although I was just a reporter and city editor and so on, because I was lucky enough to be in the newspaper business, I was included in the—. That is Gwen and I were, after our marriage, which was in '38. And so we always had pretty nice life in that direction, although on a hundred and fifty a month we didn't exactly splurge, and we didn't have many parties of our own. We lived in an apartment that probably wasn't much bigger than this living room—the Greathouse Apartments. That was also up on the bluff; operated, built by George Greathouse, who was manager of the J. C. Penney Company. Of course, even living in the Greathouse Apartments up on the hill was a [laughs] little bit— it was above the salt [laughs], but not far.

Of course, I do remember, and I guess we didn't mention about the construction of Newt Crumley's home. I guess it was probably started in about 1937, when he and Frances Smith of Lovelock were married. She had been working on the *Independent*, the *Elko Independent* as a reporter. I believe that's where Newt met her. And they were married. But at that time, Newt built this home on the northwest edge of Elko, now, of course, pretty well in, but then rather—. You could look right out on the plain; that

is, out into the fields. But he built this lavish home that everyone, of course, in Elko said, you know, “Newt is going too far here with building a great big mansion like this.” I was invited—and this was before my marriage—to attend the open house when they moved in, or shortly after they had—and it was a great, great smash that they had there. And, it just seemed like all of Elko was just pouring in and out of this big home, which, I don’t know whether I mentioned, but included a squash court. And it was rumored that this home was costing him more than \$50,000. And of course at that time [laughs] it just seemed as though he was pouring all the money from the hotel into this home, which of course was hardly true, and besides his father was still in the operation then.

The squash court itself, incidentally, after they had settled down and one thing or another, in their home, Newt, Jr. had learned to play squash in the Air Force, Air Corps, then. And it was a kind of an Air Corps game. Wherever the Air Corps had a big installation, they had a squash court, and Newt learned to play squash, which is a marvelous, but violent game. (But, they have a court now here, at the Y, I think. As far as I know, it’s the only other one in the state, and of course, this one has long since been something else. I don’t know whatever happened to the squash court.) But at the time, Newt invited a number of his friends to come up, and learn to play squash. And so we all bought squash racquets. And soon it was a great athletic activity among, perhaps, twenty persons I guess—about that number, somewhere in there.

Newt was an excellent, excellent squash player, and of course, none of the other of us could play at all. But we eventually learned, but we never, any of us, approached the skill that Newt had, with the exception of Orville Wilson, who was a local attorney, and who

was a very natural athlete. And Newt knew this, and of course, they were particularly good friends. So he coached Wilson, and Wilson kept getting better, and better, and better, until Newt had the man he wanted—somebody that would really make him play squash, and they used to have the most violent games [laughs] and the rest of us would play back and forth. Chris Sheerin and I, after work or something, would rush up and play squash. And one sort of oddity [laughs] I thought was Newt said, “Well, we might as well organize, and we’ll join the National Squash Racquets Association.” And so we did. And at that time, Newt Crumley’s squash court and his home, and our organization, at least the organization itself, was the only Squash Racquets group belonging, affiliating with the National Squash Racquets Association, west of the Mississippi River [laughs]. But anyway [laughs], that’s pretty much an aside, I guess, but—.

One of the great characters of Elko County, at that time, of course, was “Doby Doc,” more formally, Robert F. Caudill. Doby Doc was frequently seen on the streets of Elko. The fact that he was a character was both physical and through his activities—not so much physical as his dress, that is. Doby Doc always wore high bib overalls, and a great flowing, what you call almost ascot-like tie, I guess [chuckles]. I’m not sure about that word. But he wore a great tie, and he wore a flat-type hat; and was always very, very cheerful as he came to downtown Elko to handle his affairs. He owned, not a boarding house—well, a rental thing down by the river, which was composed of a couple or three freight cars divided off. (I guess it was a couple or three. It was several.) Just how Doby Doc acquired these is completely out of my ken. In fact, how Doby Doc acquired many things [chuckles] was very difficult to understand. Eventually,

of course, he accumulated memorabilia from Elko County in the latter '30s, I guess, and perhaps early '30s. Must've been early '30s, before I arrived in Elko in 1936. Such things as a joss house from perhaps Tuscarora; some other historical artifact or something from elsewhere in the county. And he had a great amount of these, and he had them all in storage somewhere, because, eventually, of course, he moved to Las Vegas, and when he did, he had an arrangement which he founded a sort of replica of a rip roaring, old western town at the Last Frontier, right beside the Hotel Last Frontier. And as Las Vegas was beginning to move toward its present day opulence, it was quite a showplace and quite a tourist attraction; most of these things not being from Clark County, but from Elko County. And it was once said about Doby Doc that if the people down around Pioche didn't look out, why that famous old city hail was it, or county courthouse would vanish, and you'd find it at Doby Doc's place down at the Last Frontier (which sort of indicated Doby Doc's activities along that line).

He was a very open type of fellow as far as surface was concerned at least. And I'll never forget at that time—not every morning, but frequently at least once or twice a week—why you'd run into Doby Doc walking down Railroad Street in Elko or something, and as he went along he greeted everyone. And I recall he would always say to me, "Morning son. God bless you, son!" And I guess that's the way he greeted one and all, with a "God bless you." There was a considerable mystery behind Doby Doc's background, and it was pretty generally thought, at least at the time, that Doby Doc was a graduate of Dartmouth College. Whether he was or not, I have no way of knowing. That was one of the things that was said about him. And how he arrived in Elko, of course, is—and came to live there

for quite a number of years, is beyond my recollection. I have no idea. He was just there, and part of Elko and Elko County, and everybody in Elko, and Elko County, for that matter, knew Doby Doc. Eventually, of course, as I say, he put together these historical items, and moved to Las Vegas, where later after establishing this replica of a frontier town, he went into business with Benny Binion, and became very, very successful in the casino activities in Las Vegas. I guess as far as I know that sort of takes care of Doby Doc [laughs]. I guess he's still down there.

My own work at the *Free Press*, with Chris Sheerin, was basically I did what I—I was in the same category. The *Free Press*, of course, had a very small news staff, which consisted of Chris Sheerin and myself, and the bookkeeper as society editor. I started out as with the title of "city editor," and, of course, that didn't mean a great deal. I went out on the beat and sold advertising, along with gathering the news, and that sort of thing. So that when I left six years later, I was still city editor [laughs]. And we didn't have any—there was no increase in the staff either, at that time.

THE JOURNALIST GOES TO WAR

But as time went on, Pearl Harbor came, and with that event, Mr. Sheerin was sure that things were gonna be very, very difficult in getting out the newspaper. And he was afraid that the war would—well, he just felt he had to tighten up, so, he suggested that I find employment elsewhere. About this time, Graham Dean came by. Mr. Dean was the publisher of the *Gazette* and *Journal* in Reno, and talked with Chris, and the thing worked out fine, because Graham said, some of their folks were going in the Army, and I was not yet—Uncle Sam had not yet tapped me on the shoulder. So I went in, left the *Free Press* in 1942, just shortly after Pearl Harbor, and joined the staff of the *Reno Evening Gazette*, taking the place, basically, of Joe Jackson who'd been commissioned an officer in the Navy, and was going into the Navy. So in my comparatively short time at the *Gazette*, the first time, I was the city beat reporter.

RENO EVENING GAZETTE 1942

And Reno, at that time—. Let's see; I believe when I joined the *Gazette* staff, that

August Frohlich was the mayor. But only for a short period. And then Harry [E.] Stewart was elected, having previously served as Reno's mayor some fifteen or twenty years before I guess, but prior to that time. I've forgotten how long. But he'd been the mayor and this was his second round, and he came back into the race and was elected. Mr. Frohlich was not a particularly forceful type fellow and he didn't last but his one term, at which apparently, as I said, I came in on the end.

Then of course, Harry E. Stewart came in, and he was very, very forceful, and a very, very smart man. And incidentally, he lived—his home was at the curve on, in Riverside Park, that is, Wingfield Park on the south side. And that was the old Stewart home. Now there's a big condominium just went in there, I noticed not too long ago [chuckles] But, Stewart's regime was very successful, and very good for Reno, because he really knew his way around.

Councilmen at the time—maybe Charlie Cowan; "Rags" Bill Justi, Pop Southworth. Joe Reese was city clerk—an old, old time Reno family. And Joe served as city clerk for, it must've been four or five terms I suppose,

something like that. That was before Terrill Taylor. In fact, Terrill was assistant, I think, to Joe Reese. Joe, I don't believe, ever transcribed the meetings. He just [laughs] wrote them down, and called the role. That was it.

The chief of police then, or at least most of the time that I was covering city hall (among other things) was, I think, Harry Fletcher; and he was succeeded by Clayton Phillips. Clayton Phillips was an FBI agent during the war. When he came back, he was named to succeed Fletcher, and I can't remember the reason for Fletcher's losing that post, offhand. Difficult to remember those, and I guess they're not—it's not too important a situation, as far as I'm concerned, or in this recollection anyway.

Of course, there are now reporters covering almost every division you can think of in Reno now, between the *Journal* and the *Gazette*. At that time, however, I covered the city hall—the old city hall, of course, included the police station. And I covered the police. I talked to the mayor; talked to the chief of police; talked to the city attorney; and that sort of thing. Then I would leave the city hall and go to the courthouse. And at the courthouse, why, I'd cover the county jail. And of course, Elwood Beemer's county clerk's office, and it was Elwood Beemer's county clerk's office. He was called "Boss" at the time, and he was the boss in that, and I guess in [laughs] some ways, in the whole courthouse.

There was, let's see, beside those. Oh, on occasion, of course, why you'd cover the other—the treasurer, and so on, depending upon how the news broke, if there was anything coming out of those offices. And the county assessor then— (I guess that was after Frank Campbell).

And then on occasion, of course, we talked with judges, and there were—two then? I guess there were two judges then. And the district attorney was Grant Bowen, who has

long served, many, numerous terms now as district judge.

After going through all those offices, I, then, proceeded to the firehouse, as a rule, and I would pick up any conflagrations that had occurred, how many cats had been taken down out of trees, and that sort of thing, at the firehouse, and have coffee with the firemen. And so when something big did come up, why, I could call the firemen and would immediately get attention. Actually the coverage at the firehouse was [chuckles] useful mainly for that purpose, to just keep in contact with the firemen, because in a big fire, then, you get through the fire lines easily, you could do whatever was necessary, and always get cooperation from the fire department.

Then, too, I went to the Forest Service, and checked the Forest Service out. And then when I got Lack to the office, I would—or perhaps (difficult to remember) but in any event, it also included making phone calls to the mortuaries, and getting the births from the hospitals. So [laughs] you can see that Reno's grown a little bit now, because, of course, what I did basically then, is covered by say, five reporters now perhaps, something like that; perhaps more. So it's indicative of the growth of the papers and the growth of the city and the whole bit. Anyway, that was mainly my routine of work at the *Gazette*.

People that I worked with, of course, included—the city editor was John Sanford, who later became editor of the *Gazette*, and whose father was—not actually, but basically the founder of the *Reno Evening Gazette*, as it was known for many, many years. Joe Jackson, of course, was gone at that time, having taken of f to help the United States Navy in its efforts.

At one time—can't remember for sure, but I believe that it was then, that the sports editor was Frank McCulloch. Frank McCulloch was

a native of Fernley. He was an excellent sports editor, and he was an excellent newspaperman by virtue of the fact that eventually he became one of the top editors in *Time* magazine, and also for a time, was day managing editor of the *Los Angeles Times* in later years.

My nephew, Lloyd Leonard, was on the staff of the *Gazette* at that time. Lloyd was nephew, but six months my junior, about, was all.

The telegraph editor was one of the great newspapermen in Nevada, by the name of Frank Helmick. I presume, though, probably John has reviewed almost all this sort of thing for over a period of time.

Well, what was John like [laughs]? And what was Frank McCulloch like in those days? Frank McCulloch didn't have any hair then either [laughs]. Frank McCulloch was fast talking, just everything just came out in spurts of conversation, very easy to get along with, usually. Being sports editor when I was there, of course I didn't have any direct contact except on a friendship basis. But it's difficult to tell as far as expertise is concerned in any field, and in the newspaper, at that time, who was to know that Frank McCulloch was to become one of the great news reporters of—perhaps even the history of the country, anyways. And he was a very sociable and likable fellow, who had, who you could—. There's one thing looking back on it anyway, and you didn't think about it then perhaps, but after his great success in the general field of journalism, you can recall that he seemed to have—perhaps the conversation that I just mentioned—he would just talk like a machine gun, then he'd turn around, sit down at his typewriter and go to work. And looking back, I've often thought, well gee, I remember about Frank, he just seemed like somethin' was just shovin' him all the time, shoving him, and he just dove into whatever he did. And first thing

you know, off he went to join *Time*, I guess. Can't remember whether that was right after the war or before.

John Sanford, of course, acted as though he were an old curmudgeon, and with a rough voice and a growl, and bang [laughs], and all that sort of thing, and you didn't ever know when you walked in in the morning whether John was on the verge of throwing you out if you'd missed something on a story the day before or not. [Laughs] But he was, proved to be a tremendous asset, as far as I was concerned, because by the time I got to the *Gazette*, he had been in the paper for a good number of years, and he knew everyone in town, everyone in town, and he knew what was going on, and he knew how to—. He was an absolute bug on good English, and if you didn't use any he would yell at you like you'd just gotten out of kindergarten, and if you made an error in a story, he'd—. As city editor, of course, he reads all the stories. I remember once in all the time I worked for John (this is when he was city editor) that he looked up and said, "Good story, Paul." I'm not sure that he said it after that, but that's the only time I remember, and that sticks out in my mind. Usually he would find something wrong [chuckles]. And he would tell you that it was wrong, in no uncertain terms, and by that, you didn't do it again, and you learned, and learned, and learned. Now that's John Sanford. He was the only boss that I had in the *Gazette* until—well, I guess he was the only one, come to think of it, because when I came back from the war, and worked for the *Gazette* again, John, by that time, was editor (title of editor), and mainly wrote editorials and the general newsroom was supervised then by Joe Jackson, who was managing editor. And Joe Jackson, of course, was equally accurate, a very—and equally dour [laughs] in some ways. Joe Jackson,

then and now, says very little, unless there's something to say.

When I went to the *Gazette*, a man by the name of Dick Bergholtz was the AP correspondent. Dick Bergholtz was a very—a cynic, one of those cynical type fellows, as the AP correspondent. And I think over on the *Journal* side where the UP office was, was Ken Foster, who was just the opposite, was meticulous acting, and very gentlemanly type. And Dick Bergholtz was—well [chuckles] for instance when he would write his stories, Bergholtz would, you'd think he was gonna fall on the floor. He would get his typewriter underneath him, sort of like this [gesture shows typewriter on lap] and he would slouch way down like that, and he would write his stories at this very peculiar angle [laughs]. And he may have had a little difficulty in the newsroom. I'm not sure that Dick was greatly admired, but I always got along with him fine, as future matters proved.

But my friendship with Dick culminated on the beach at Leyte (I believe it was Leyte, seems as though now it were). Anyway, I was a cryptographer, and I was walking down the beach. And a command car came driving up the beach, and somebody yelled, "Hey, Paul?" I turned and said, "Yes," you know, and I was probably ready to give somebody a salute, since this was a command car, and I was a corporal, or something. And out of the car stepped Dick Bergholtz. And so we shook, and he said, "Where've you been?" And I explained where I'd been, and what little I had done and so on. And he had been overseas as a war correspondent for some time by then. And he was a civilian, of course; and in the command car with him were a major and a colonel, and people like that I guess. And Dick kept them waiting while he talked to me. And so he said to me, "So, you're a cryptographer." And I said, "Yes."

And he said, "How do you like it?"

And I said, "Oh, it's all right." I said, "Someday, if this war keeps up," or words to that effect, "it would be nice if I could get in public relations, but I don't suppose that would ever happen, Dick."

He said, "Oh, you'd like to get in public, relations?"

And I said, "Yes, I think that'd probably be where I could do the most good, if I could do any." And being blind in one eye, I'd never had a chance, of course, to go to OCS or anything of that nature.

So anyway, we parted, and sort of the effect that a war correspondent had, was pretty well demonstrated, because it wasn't but a week or two till the orders came through, and I was transferred from cryptography to [chuckles] to public relations office, in which I remained until I was discharged, including going on up to Tokyo. But that was the last time I've seen Dick Bergholtz, although I've seen his by-line, oh, I did for many, many years after—in fact, not too long ago, actually, back here in the states. So he made it back all right.

THE WARTIME CLIMATE

This time, even though it was brief, in 1942, was very important, because there's all the reaction to the war, and trying to get the war effort started, and my observations as a newspaperman of what the general atmosphere was around here; the beginnings of rationing, and the problems of shortages, and all this sort of thing. Let's see, I came to the *Gazette* in '42, and I left for the Army in '43, and I was gone then myself for two or three years so—. I don't particularly remember that Reno was very upset about this sort of thing. It may have been, of course with the rationing situation and all that, I guess, gone into action. But, I don't remember that we did.

I remember Gwen writing me about the “A” tabs on the windshields and all that sort of business. But by the time I left I don’t think that there—. And there were shortages; for instance cigarettes, apparently, became very short later. They’re a bigger factor than they are now, since they’ve been kind of downgraded. I recall that in Leyte, I received a package from Gwen, which included two battered packages of cigarettes, because she had hoarded them, as it were, for me, to send to me overseas. And at the time that I got these two battered packages of cigarettes, I had three cartons of cigarettes sitting on top of my bunk [laughs]. And I thought, “Poor Gwen, here she’s gone to all this trouble,” and not only that, but they cost us ten cents a pack, and no tax on them or anything. But my recollections of the effects of the war, I think that’s another thing that originally I did cover, the ration board and that sort of thing, perhaps for a while.

There were some accusations against the ration board not working evenhandedly. There were some accusations of created shortages, and hoardings, and runs on various kinds of foods, and all this sort of thing. You just wondered if I had any feeling for that? I don’t know. I just can’t recall that we had a great deal of trouble during the time that I was still in the states. I think most of that developed—obviously when it started, there wouldn’t have been any, and a few months after that I was gone. So I’m not much of an expert on any difficulties they had around here. I’m really not because I was in the service.

Well, going back just a little bit then to Elko—what was the reaction there to the beginning of the war and Pearl Harbor, and so forth? I remember, mostly all I remember, about it was a tremendous excitement that, of course, that was extant throughout the United

States. Pearl Harbor day and from that time on, I know, of course, it took many people out of there including—. I recall on Pearl Harbor Day that someone came by and picked me up. That was on Sunday, wasn’t it? Yeah. I knew I wasn’t working [chuckles]. And Les Moren, who was a doctor (and who still is, probably the most prominent doctor in Elko now; had a “Les Moren Day” for him a year or two ago) but he then, of course, was pretty much a young man like the rest of us batting about Elko. And I recall his picking me up at the apartment—and wherever we were going—the charge of excitement in it, and the fact that he said, “I don’t know what’s gonna happen, but I’m, of course, gonna have to go.” And he did. He was in the medical corps, naturally. And I guess it probably denuded Elko, but there again, you see, I wasn’t there very long after Pearl Harbor. Then I was at the *Gazette* for a comparatively short time, and then I was gone over to the South Pacific. I’m sorry. Pretty blank on any background.

One thing I remember, the only thing not—I don’t recall anything particularly about the National Guard. But I do remember that just as soon as Pearl Harbor Day occurred (and it seems to me it was almost the next day, but I couldn’t say for sure) there were soldiers at bridges all around. And of course, we lived high, just above the airport where the planes came in. And I remember it was just days after, that we heard this tremendous roar, and these fighter planes all landed in Elko, and then fueled up, I suppose, and took off. And that gave, of course, that all added to the feeling of alarm, I guess, concerning the war. And I suppose everyone was uptight as they were everywhere. But the National Guard, I can’t remember. I suppose they must’ve called them in here to Reno, and then sent them out. I don’t remember that though.

YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW

How did I get into the Army? How I got into it? Uncle Sam [laughs] sent me a notice along with several others. Well, I was rejected once, I think, and went back to work for a very short—well, I guess I was just rejected in the local preliminary examination, you know, or whatever they had, because I was blind in one eye. But then it wasn't very long after that, that I was called up again.

I'll never forget, I left with quite a contingent to Fort Douglas for our actual examination. And we had a cat [laughs] by the name of Timoshenko, after a famous Russian general. And I left in the middle of night to catch the train. And we lived out on South Center Street. The independence of cats, of course, is very—as you know, they're pretty independent characters. And this cat was just as independent as any, and he was a fightin' male. But when I left the house that morning, that cat followed me an entire block, clear up to the corner, meowing at me. And I thought, "Now how's he know I'm going away a long time maybe, and maybe for [laughs] good," you know? It was the strangest thing, because he never paid any attention when I left the house before, he never bothered with anything like that. And here it was early in the morning, and he pattered along behind me like a dog! It was a little bit shivery [laughs] you know? I thought, "Now what does he know I don't know?"

Anyway, I went on, I was walking of course. Since it was the middle of the night, Gwen didn't go up with me. We just—. I went by myself, and we met at, I think at the Golden, or someplace like that. It wasn't a military place or anything, and the train was coming in, so there were quite a bunch of us. Let's see. Oh an insurance man here, big

insurance man now—isn't that weird, I can't remember his name. There are two or three people I know, but I just can't bring them to mind. But anyway, the group gathered, and there were quite a number of us, and I've forgotten how many, like perhaps ten, fifteen, twenty, you know, going in this one "shipment" to Fort Douglas. But the train pulled in, and we tried to get on; there was no place to sit down, in the train. It was jammed with other servicemen or people going, whatever, on this special train. And this aggravated us greatly. And we said, "Well, where are we gonna—can't even sit down. We have to stand up all the way to Fort Douglas—nuts to that." So we all got together and stood beside the train, and just decided we wouldn't go. So we didn't. Stayed right there and let the train pull out. And believe me, the next train that came by [laughs] there was room for us on it. Nothing was ever said. But actually, we were disobeying a military order, I suppose. We weren't in the Army then, and we decided we're civilians still, and by gosh that's the way, if they can't find a place for us to sit. Eventually though, when we got on the next train, and I can't remember whether that was—. It must've been one right behind it, because I don't recall ever going back home or anything. But the next train that came by was, I don't know where they dug it up from, it was old as the V and T [laughs], and there was, believe it or not, a pot-bellied stove in the middle of this train, to heat the car that we were in. We got to Salt Lake and had to change trains, I think. We changed trains, and we said, to the porter, one of us, "Boy, that last one was really a dog. Is this train any newer than that last one?"

And he said, "Listen, this train was good enough for your father in World War I, and it's gonna be good enough for you, so get on." [Laughs]

So we piled on, and arrived at Fort Douglas. And I, of course, in the interviews, and so on, why I was a newspaperman, so they sort of made some note of that situation. And after examination and so on and so forth, why they put us all in various barracks, and divided us all up, and we were split up at that point. And I was in a formation—when they first got the recruits on the company street at Fort Douglas, they lined us up and they were gonna take the usual military situation; determine why we were there, what they were gonna put us to doing, and so on and so forth. And so, out on the, kind of a platform in front of the headquarters office, came this great big, burly sergeant. He was about my height and weighed about twice as much, and dark beard and so on. And I looked at him from down where I was standing, up to where he was and—[laughs] now I've forgotten his name. Isn't that awful? What in the world?—it was Vic Arobio from Lovelock. And he was a sergeant, and being a sergeant at Fort Douglas was like being a brigadier general some other places, because, of course, there were nothing but recruits and buck privates in the rear rank, and a corporal was pretty high, and a sergeant was just something else. Anyway, Arobio looked at me, and we'd played basketball against each other and one thing and another, and knew each other to some extent. I guess maybe even gone to college. Maybe we'd played on the freshmen basketball team. So anyway, Arobio said, "Hi, Paul." And we shook, and so on and so forth. And he made a notation on that one, and moved down to the next fellow. So my duty for the days that I was at Fort Douglas, was policing up a barracks that was empty [laughs]. And, all I had to do was, I would get up in the morning and go to this empty barracks, and push a mop down the middle of it, you know, sort of dust off a little bit, you know, and that was all I had to

do. So it's well to know people in the service as proved by Dick Bergholtz and Vic Arobio, I guess, in reverse order of time.

Eventually, though I was in another formation, and through the loud speaker system I heard, "Paul—Leonard." And I was standing in this big formation, and I thought, "Hmmm, what's that for?" And it was way up in another section. "Paul—Leonard." Second call. No answer, as I was standing in formation at attention or something. So as soon as this formation broke up, why I said, "I wonder where in the world that came from," and I tried to check. But I never could find out until—I think eventually I found out that, of course, they wanted me to go to headquarters as a PR man (at Fort Douglas) just to stay there. Oh yes, the AP, in the meantime, after Bergholtz left, had hired or stationed here in Reno, Leroy Hittle. And Leroy Hittle then himself was drafted or whatever into the Army, and he had been sent to Fort Douglas to be the head PR man, and he somehow or other ran across my name and wanted me, but nobody answered, and so they just gave up. And I couldn't find out at that time where it was, so of course, I never got to be PR at Fort Douglas.

Eventually, I think we were there about three weeks, I suppose was the usual time for something like that. Some people had been there three months, and some people'd be there three days, of course, and bang, they'd be gone. I think I was there about two to three weeks. And then, after interviews and so on and so forth, and testing and all that sort of business, why they decided that I would be in the Signal Corps. So I was placed in a Signal Corps unit to wait shipment to Camp Crowder, Missouri, which eventually took place. And at Camp Crowder I learned something of Signal Corps work; never the radio, the dit-da, however, we were told, at that time, that

we might be in anything, and of course, the Signal Corps—. Camp Crowder, then, which is about twenty or thirty miles south of Joplin, Missouri, or was. There is nothing there now, I understand from someone that I know in Missouri. But then there were forty-thousand troops at Camp Crowder. And it was mainly a Signal Corps installation. And they taught you pole climbing [laughs] at which I was not very adept, at sticking those spikes in a pole and going up. And of course, all of the things that related to Signal Corps and the communications and so on, why, you studied over a six weeks' period.

At that time, Gwen came to Camp Crowder, or to Neosho, Missouri, which was south, and she got a job on the base, eventually in the hiring civilian employees for Camp Crowder, and she worked at that, until I completed my training.

Then we came back to Reno, and while we were here, I picked up the paper one morning, and the invasion of Europe had started. And so, in any event, I went from here to Camp Stoneman—no, from here to Camp Beale, California, now an Air Force base, or was later Beale Air Force Base. It's up by Marysville. And then from Beale to Camp Stoneman, which was down by Pittsburgh, and from Stoneman to New Guinea.

I went overseas under the Dutch flag, on a ship called the *Boschfonteine*, which was an old Dutch tub, and had some Indians on it (that is Indians from India) as a crew for cooking for personnel on the ship. And of course, we were jammed just like—about three levels, three, four levels down you know [laughs]. I always thought about the Japanese and their torpedoes. If one had ever hit that old tub, it would've broken up into nothing. But we went through the Golden Gate to New Guinea, and up Milne Bay, which is right at the very southern tip of New Guinea, of the

tail of New Guinea, without incident. And we stayed there a very short time, and then back out around, and then up to Buna, which was a famous battleground earlier. (The battle of Buna was a terrible, terrible battle, but it was long over when I got there, thank heaven.) And so we were in a cryptography unit, breaking messages, and that sort of thing. At one point, after I had been overseas for a number of months, I broke a message myself, which was a routine listing of losses (United States naval losses), and among them was the *Boschfonteine* [laughs] which was rather, a little bit surprising to me, I was breaking this, decoding this message, and came across that name.

New Guinea, by that time, was pretty well cleared up of the Japanese. I don't recall how long we were there before the invasion of Leyte. But anyway, by that time we were at Hollandia, New Guinea. We went from Buna, or a place near Buna. We boarded a ship, one signal unit, just about four or five of us, and went from there to Hollandia. And we arrived in Hollandia, the night before the invasion fleet left for Leyte. We were one day late, or we'd probably been along with it. It was the most awesome, one of the most awesome sights I'd ever seen in my life, because Hollandia harbor is a tremendous, tremendous harbor, one of the great harbors of the world, but there's nobody there. There were then. But I mean there's no—the town of Hollandia itself is nothing but a few shanties sticking out over the water. Or was.

We woke up in the morning. We didn't realize this, but of course you can see hardly any lights or anything—we just came up the ocean and through into the harbor, this tremendous harbor, and sat there. And we were on an old ship that was carrying ammunition, a special detachment just plunked down onto this ship to bring us up to MacArthur's headquarters, which were

at Hollandia. But that morning, when we woke up and got up and ate our K-rations or whatever; when we came up from below and stood on the deck, and looked around, there were ships of every conceivable kind and description, from battleships down to real, comparatively, small ones, I suppose. I don't know, small ships. I know nothing about ships. But there were so many that that entire harbor was covered with ships. And we stood there in awestruck silence, looking at this massive might of the United States. And eventually, as we stood there, a little, tiny airplane, perhaps like a Piper Cub or something, just a small airplane, began flying over the harbor, and this airplane would come down and dip toward a ship and then that ship would begin to move, until they all began to get in line, and then we looked out at the harbor and as far as you could see, in one line, going out of the Hollandia Harbor, was this mighty armada, on its way to Leyte [chuckles]. And we sat there almost alone in the harbor.

And we didn't get to Leyte until we went on into Hollandia (our unit) and joined MacArthur headquarters signal communications department. And we worked in a building that had cryptography machines just scattered, just rows of them, breaking messages coming and going. They're sent in code and then you decode. And then the various officers who were sending messages elsewhere and so on, would put it—encode it. All this was done on a—and of course it was scrambled as it went through the air. And we handled some very interesting—. The most important one I think I ever remember was the invasion of Borneo, with orders from MacArthur's headquarters to—or to MacArthur's headquarters, I guess from the joint chiefs, designating the invasion of Borneo, and where all, where this unit would

go, and where that unit would go, and where they would all go, for the invasion. And of course, this was deep, deep secret at the time. And from that standpoint, the Signal Corps turned out to be a pretty interesting place; we were really right in the midst of what was going on by virtue of encoding and decoding these messages.

At these headquarters, one oddity which we may have mentioned—I was standing in the chow line one day, and somebody tapped me on the shoulder and it was Wallie Warren. So, of course, we had a Nevada reunion, and Wallie had just flown in, and I've forgotten what—. I think he may have been in public relations. I've forgotten what. Anyway, he'd just flown up from the tip of New Guinea, I believe, to Hollandia, in a P38, or a Black Widow, which were then the top fighting planes, two fuselage-type things, you know; and told me how long it took, and I figured how long that took against how long it took us [chuckles] to come up on the ship behind—just as the invasion was starting. We went down to the—. MacArthur's headquarters was located just above Lake Santani, which is a big lake in New Guinea, and if I remember correctly, about the only lake in New Guinea of any size at all, but it's a tremendous lake. And of course, it looks down on nothing but solid green jungle, except for an airstrip. And they'd shot down a Japanese plane, just before Wallie and I met, or right along in there. And so Wallie knew about this, and so he rounded up somebody, and we went down and had our picture taken looking at the remnants of this Japanese plane. It's in there [points to room]. But then, of course, Wallie went his way, and I mine.

Joe Jackson was at a naval installation just walking distance from MacArthur's headquarters, and I knew this. So one day, I went down to see Joe Jackson, and Lieutenant

Jackson was out with the fleet at the time, so I missed Joe, although he was just walking distance from—. Either he or I moved shortly thereafter; went up to Leyte—I went to Leyte.

There were numerous people that—you know, in the army you really don't—. You form quick, intimate friendships, and then bang! They're gone. Someone's transferred; something else happens. There's very, very little doing anything side by side, for a very long period, a la "Willie and Joe." At least that was my experience, though I knew people very intimately, and then they were gone. On my return to the states, I remember, after I had gotten my discharge, there were two people who lived in San Francisco, with whom I had been closely associated in PR. One's name was Dave Atcheson, and the other—I can't even remember now. So I did have a contact with them after I got back. And since that time, however, of all the people that I met, and we swore everlasting friendship with, perhaps I got Christmas cards from two or three of them for a year or two. And only Dave Atcheson, is the only one, and he was from Elgin, Illinois, actually. And he is the only one with whom I served in the public relations division of the Eighth Army—General Eichelberger, the commanding general of the Eighth Army. But Dave Atcheson is the only person that I'm still in contact with, and I received a note from him just a month or so ago in which he said he was coming over to Reno to see me, and then something happened, and he didn't come, and that was the second time that had happened. However, you can say that we're still in contact. The only one, though, in two years, two months, and twenty-two days that I still know where he is.

Another, that we did exchange Christmas cards and so on, was Glen Kendall, who later became managing editor of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. And then he died a couple

'r three years ago. Somehow or other I got a—oh, I believe his widow sent me a clipping or something. Probably she read some of his notes or something, and realized that we'd worked together. I can't remember now, of his death. But, of course, that really, after just a very few years, why, only Atcheson is left, as far as I know, that I—. And of course, that's mainly because he's nearby [laughs]. And they come from everywhere.

So I remained at Leyte after this view of the invasion fleet and so on. I went, moved up behind them to Leyte from Hollandia, and when I arrived at Leyte, practically all the fighting was over, because it was several weeks. Once again, I was just behind the action, because our unit was called, and we were down by Lake Santani, and had to drive up in jeeps to the headquarters. We were on duty, I believe, and they called our signal unit up from down below, down where we lived, and I learned afterwards, I saw somebody who knew, that they'd called our names out two or three of us, and we were up working at the headquarters. So they just picked up what there was of us, and took off just within a few days after MacArthur had waded ashore and said, (What was it he said?) "I have returned!" [Laughs] And so we stayed on there, then, for some period of time, at GHQ in Hollandia, and by the time we got to Leyte, things were pretty safe. (It was there, incidentally, the Bergholtz matter, seeing him on the beach and so on, took effect after I'd gotten to Leyte. So it must've happened—. Hmm, that's confusing. Can't remember how that happened, but anyway at Leyte—yes, it was at Leyte that I was transferred from cryptography to public relations.) By this time, of course, the allies were pretty much on the move, and Leyte was pretty well secured, or at least most of it, important parts.

And naturally then, they began, the Army, the Navy, and the Marines began their plans for the invasion of Tokyo. And I think other units, of course, had landed up above north of Leyte at Manila, and so on. But at Leyte, they developed a—. Let's see, I was in public relations, they took us out in the jungle, and in a very secluded place, and showed us, as PR people, the plans for the invasion of Tokyo. And they had a relief map—not a map, but a papier mâché thing of the entire harbor of Tokyo, and where the landing points were and the whole bit. And at that time, of course, they were figuring on how many hundreds of thousands of men would have to land to drive in from Yokohama and Tokyo. We wrote various stories, of course, at that time. After I joined the PR, why, we'd write hometown stories, send something to a town in Massachusetts about how Sergeant so and so or Captain so and so, or whatever his rank or rating might be, and what he was doing, and who he was attached to, and all this sort of thing. Sometimes I wished I was back in cryptography, because it got pretty routine.

But, of course, we were at Leyte, and the news came from Harry [Truman] that they'd dropped the atomic bomb. And so that changed everything, naturally, as soon as they'd dropped the bomb on Hiroshima and then Nagasaki. The Japanese surrendered, and after the surrender in Tokyo Harbor, why, of course, everyone started to move then into the Japanese homeland. And we arrived there about a week after the surrender was signed, very first contingents, which was a highly interesting, *most* highly interesting part [laughing] of the war as far as I was concerned. But almost everyone—because you knew eventually you were going home then, unless you stubbed your toe or drank poisonous liquor or something like that, which happened to quite a few.

But we landed in Yokohama; set up headquarters in the customs house on the shore. And we lived in a silk mill, and walked to the customs house to work. After a few days there and we got settled down, we decided we'd take a little jaunt to Tokyo, and so a few of us went to the main station in Yokohama, which incidentally was untouched as were the buildings right along the shoreline of Tokyo Harbor, Tokyo Bay. And on the ridge of the hills that surround Yokohama, the houses were untouched. But down in the valley part of Yokohama, for miles and miles and miles, there was absolutely nothing left. Yokohama was just flattened to the ground. And they had not bombarded—bombed the shore installations, because they wanted to save them to operate from when the invasion came, which, of course, they didn't have to do.

So we went to Tokyo, got on the interurban which went from Yokohama to Tokyo, and there was a tremendous, tremendous rush of people to get on this train, and the oriental courtesy went out the window and everybody made a mad dash to get in. The doors all opened simultaneously, I think, as they do in New York [chuckles]—I've never ridden on the New York, you know the side doors—. And so we were in battle gear and had carbines on, war carbines at that time, because there wasn't anybody to protect you; went on this interurban to Tokyo—must've gone sixty, seventy miles an hour. And it seemed like at every jump, it was gonna jump the tracks [laughs], but it got into the Tokyo main station in great shape. So we spent some time walking around there, and everybody looking at us in awe. And everybody looked at us in awe when we got on this train, which was absolutely—the car that we got on appeared to be absolutely jammed, but when we, the “conquerors,” stepped into the car, they just made way like this [gesture, separating] for

us, and at the same time there were enough seats for three of us (I think there were three of us). And then we sort of watched each other cautiously between Yokohama and Tokyo.

We got there, went out into the great plaza, and down on toward the palace; walked by the palace and that sort of thing (which is comparatively close—you can see it from Tokyo main station, just barely, one edge of it), and then went back. And we visited Tokyo on several occasions. The Japanese were completely friendly, outwardly, no trouble at all. I remember one occasion, there was a Japanese fellow trying to get his (I think this is while we were wandering around in Tokyo) —he had a horse that was rather fractious, and he was trying to pull a wagon load of something or other up a hill. And he couldn't get the horse—and I said, "Let's give him a shove." So my friends and I went along, and got behind the wagon and shoved like this [gestures] and that made the horse move. And we got him up onto the street. And he turned around and looked in amazement, absolute amazement [laughs]. "Arigato, arigato, arigato," he said [thank you! thank you!]. So we were sort of a little bit helpful from time to time there. And they were very helpful, except of course, the language barrier was a little difficult.

Going down the Ginza one day, we were looking for the famous Mitsubishi department store, and couldn't find it. And a fellow stepped up to us, a Japanese, and said, "May I help you?"

And we said, "Oh! Great, yeah." We said, "We're looking for the big department store. He looked blankly at us. We found out that all he knew was, "May I help you?" [Laughs] That was the only English that he knew.

And we ran into another one, someone else eventually, of course, and we asked about the Mitsubishi department store. "Oh,

Mitsubishi, Mitsubishi. Boom! No more Mitsubishi." [Throws hands up, shakes head] And then they would laugh after this, as though it were funny. The oriental outward appearance was so—of course, I'm quite sure we didn't know about what they were thinking, but outwardly they were very, very friendly, and apparently took it all as "Great, it's over, and now we can laugh again." And it was a very interesting experience in Yokohama and Tokyo, and I was there about five weeks, when I had enough points to come home. So I did [chuckles].

There was a captain in the PR who was a very nice fellow, and was always given to a quip and one thing or another. I, by this time, was a buck sergeant! And I was standing on the stern of the ship waiting for it to pull out to the United States, and the captain had come down to tell us goodbye from our PR unit. He looked up and, "Hey Paul," he said, "come on back down, I'll make you a staff sergeant tomorrow," [laughs] then he laughed.

But, on the way home—. We went home—we went over on this *Boschfontaine* I was telling you, explaining it was such a little, little, old, almost a tramp ship. We came back on the *U.S.S. General Weigand*, which was a tremendously big ship. We must've had 3,000 soldiers on it, I guess. Just a tremendous thing. And as soon as you got on, of course, there was organization. And somebody'd do this and somebody'd do that. And they went down the list, and I was the editor of the paper for the trip home [laughs]. So Uncle Sam recognized my tremendous talents in the newspaper business, just as I was coming home to be discharged! [Laughs] But anyway, it was fun getting out the paper. What was going on in this unit of the ship, and what was going on somewhere else, and maybe a little bit of national news of what was going on nationally and internationally, and

so on, with the war over what was going to happen, all that sort of thing. But, we landed at Camp Anza, or something, down around Los Angeles. And from there, lo and behold, went back to Camp Beale. And on Valentine's Day, of what?—'46, I was discharged. Quite a Valentine!

Back here of course, I worked for the *Gazette*.

THE *ELY DAILY TIMES* AND ME

Well, on my return home from the Army, and discharge on February 14, 1946, I came back to Reno, of course, and back to my job as a reporter on the *Gazette*. I worked there for, oh, a few months I guess it was, and then one day had a call from a friend of mine, E. P. Caffery, who later worked under Judge Bruce Thompson as a bailiff, U.S. District Court. At that time Mr. Caffery had been appointed to a new federal job in Nevada. He was named manager of the Field Service for the U. S. Department of commerce (a post later handled for many years by Jack Howell, and now by Jerry Jeremy). But, he talked with me one day and offered to recommend me for his assistant. So I sort of had the idea that I was kinda tired of reporting, tired of the smell of the city jail every morning at seven o'clock [chuckles], and so on. Anyway, so I said to myself that well, I'll get out of the newspaper business, so I told him that I would take the job if I was appointed—and I was.

Working though, for a government bureau, was not my bag. Incidentally, our office was in the basement of the old Elks

building, at the southeast corner of First and Sierra. (Of course, the Elks building, later was destroyed in a big explosion and fire in downtown Reno.) Shuffling the papers round there and so on and so forth, as I say, was not to my liking. So about that time, Vail Pittman, Governor Vail Pittman—I guess it would be the time when he became acting governor, shortly thereafter or something— anyway, Governor Pittman got in touch with me and informed me that he was losing the man who had been running the *Times* for him during the period since he had just become governor, and wanted to know whether or not I'd be interested in taking over the editor and manager job at the *Ely Daily Times*, which of course, Governor and Mrs. Pittman owned. So I took the post.

The reason for the post being open, incidentally, was that Walter Wilcox had been running the paper—had come up from Las Vegas and taken over operation of the *Ely Times*. Wilcox, who incidentally, is now Dr. Walter Wilcox, professor of journalism at UCLA, had been machine gunned across the

chest in France during World War II, while he led his platoon during an invasion from the south of France, in the army of General Alexander Patch. And his chest started bothering him again, and so he had to leave the job. And that's why the opening occurred, as far as I was concerned.

So I resigned from the Department of Commerce, assistant directorship, or whatever [laughs] it was, and Gwen and I moved to Ely late in 1946. And I spent the next four years as manager of the *Ely Daily Times* for Governor Pittman. Meanwhile, however, Charles Russell, who was later to become Nevada's governor, had been elected to Congress. And Mr. Russell was owner and editor of the *Ely Record*, weekly newspaper there. And with his move to Washington imminent, he wished to dispose of the *Record*, so Governor Pittman bought the *Record* from Charles Russell. That resulted in the governor also appointing me as manager of the *Ely Record*, so I had two newspapers on my hands in Ely. The *Record* was about three or four blocks on Aultman Street west of the *Times*. And I found myself spending most of the time running from one paper to the other, trying to "put out the fire," as it were, and getting very little accomplished [chuckles] in the interim. About the time I began complaining to the governor that I was getting tired of being the leading foot racer on Aultman Street in Ely, why, I got an answer to my dilemma, I guess, about a year later perhaps, somewhere in there, give or take a few months. Wilcox regained his health, applied for the job as editor of the *Ely Record*, and to my great relief, Governor Pittman hired Wilcox to run the *Record*, leaving me only with the *Ely Daily Times*.

So now I had competition [laughs]. And, even though I was in charge of a daily, and Wilcox came back, took over the managership and editorship of the weekly, but it was really

great to not have to worry about the *Record* on one hand. And Wilcox and I had a wonderful time during a period of—couple of years, I guess, fighting each other in the newspaper. Often he would scoop me on one of the local stories. He, of course, only having to publish once a week, why, he was always looking for a scoop so that on Friday he would come out with something that was not in the *Times*. Then the next week I'd scratch around, trying to find something, and if I did I would try to hold it back, and run it on Friday so that I could get back at him. But I think he probably did more scooping than I did, having the other four or five days of the week to work on it, and we having a daily to put out in Ely—at least that's my excuse.

In our editorials, Wilcox would write something, and I'd criticize what he'd written in an editorial for the *Record*; and I'd criticize what he'd written in an editorial in the *Times*, or make some reference to the error. And then he would come back at me, until it got so that people in Ely were of the impression that we were gonna have a shootout on Aultman Street one of these days. Of course, this was ridiculous, and as a matter of fact, Wilcox and I would, almost every morning along about nine or ten o'clock he'd drop in or I'd drop up to the *Record*, and we'd go down to the Crystal Cafe, and have a cup of coffee and talk things over. Once, I remember, as we were walking up the street toward the coffee shop, one of Ely's prominent citizens stopped his car right in the street, rolled down the window, and yelled, "I thought you guys hated each other!" We were very happy with this of course, because it showed competition was gaining readership and interest in both papers.

I think there were a number of disheartening bumps for Gwen and me during our Ely stay, but generally we had a most pleasant time there. Ely, of course, it's not the

easiest place to live as far as climate and that sort of thing. Thirty, thirty-five below zero often in the wintertime. Great in summer, however, because a temperature of ninety in Ely, everyone thought they were roasting to death. It's 7200 feet, I think, about as high as Donner Summit.

IMPORTANT STORIES. HAY AND OIL

There were, of course, several big news stories that broke, but during my time in Ely, I'd say probably the two largest were the exploration for oil, and the great haylift of 1948, I think; and which, of course, we were very deeply involved in at one time. I made a recording concerning the conditions of the haylift, which was broadcast on, I think, CBS in the East, which was quite an interesting little experience. What actually happened was, I interviewed on the telephone with the line going to New York, I interviewed George Swallow, a rancher, who was one of those in the forefront in handling the haylift. The haylift was brought about, of course, by the fact it snowed, and snowed, and snowed, until for one period of almost twenty-four hours no one could get in or leave Ely. In the midst of this, incidentally, a printer that I'd hired, did fight his way through, and he had just an awful time. In fact, he arrived just before all the roads were closed.

The big trouble was, to my recollection (although I know very little about the cattle industry), but basically the cattle, in White Pine County and even in the environs, were trailed southward down toward Lincoln County in the fall, where the snow would not hamper them. The only trouble was that in the haylift winter, the snow was four feet deep down where there wasn't any snow as a rule. And then of course, there were always some cattle up north in the snow, up around

Ely area, and the snow was even deeper there. And so the cattle would just have died by the thousands without the help of the Army Air Corps—guess it was called the Air Corps then, before it was Air Force—.

The Air Corps sent in "flying boxcars," that is when it was declared a tremendous emergency and so on. The flying boxcars were great big cargo planes. And Ely residents would get in the cargo planes, and rope themselves in, into the big cargo area, and then push the bales of hay out, on signal from, I presume from the pilot. I was all scheduled to go on one once, and had to get to the paper or something, and never got to make one of those flights, which would've been wonderful. But, as a result of course, they did save many, many cattle in dumping these bales of hay out. And they also trucked the hay in, too; great long lines of Army trucks came in to help save it.

There was a sort of a political difference of opinion about the great haylift in Ely. And William B. Wright, a very prominent Elko County rancher (and a very prominent Republican) criticized the haylift, in a sense, and said he felt it was the—well, that it was a lack of self-protection on the part of the cattle people down in Ely and so on, and they should do their own "saving" in their haylift. I'm not sure, but I think a little bit later the snow got pretty heavy, and Mr. Wright had to have help for his ranch up in Elko County [chuckles]. It seems to me that that's a case. I'm not positive about that. But, I know of course, I'd known Mr. Wright from my previous tour of duty in the Elko papers; knew him very well. In fact, he'd been to our place, and we used to argue politics, etc. So, anyway, we were very good friends. But, when he made this statement, which came out in the press, why I editorially criticized his criticism very, very severely, and our relations for a time were somewhat

[chuckles] strained when I would see him off and on, which wasn't very often in that period.

The haylift, actually, I don't believe lasted too great a time—perhaps a very few weeks. It's difficult for me to remember right now. But, anyway, it was really a—really saved the cattle industry of White Pine County, and Lincoln County too, I guess. It was such a big piece of news, such a big news story—flying these great boxcars, flying boxcars in, and the dozens and dozens of Army trucks bringing in the hay to Ely and so on, that the following year they made a motion picture of the great haylift. [Chuckles] It was a very poor picture [laughs]. But it had a couple of then well-known actors, whom I can't—and perhaps an actress, whom I can't remember now—who actually came to Ely. But, they had to make the picture the following year, and there was very little snow [laughs]! So, what snow there was, they had to depict it, and it caused quite a little snicker among those who actually knew how deep the snow had been the previous winter. But I suppose it was all right as far as the general public was concerned. They couldn't tell how deep the snow was, because they used a few drifts when they had to make their shots of the condition of the range and so on.

Well, then of course the oil excitement (which still, I think, may prove productive, but did not in that period) caused a tremendous long running story. When the oil exploration started, it was not a fly-by-night situation. And the Standard and Continental oil companies came in, drilled west of Hamilton. They're, I think, the only ones who actually did any real heavy drilling. But Richfield, and Shell, and I'm not sure—oh, others too. I think there were another one or two other big companies. And, of course, Standard and Continental combined to drill this one well. And they went down a long, long ways out west of Hamilton, I say, several miles west

of Hamilton. But it was a dry hole, and they never hit anything.

But the geology there certainly must indicate that somewhere in eastern Nevada there is lots and lots of oil, far beyond anything that has ever been found. Of course, they did find one well which is still productive. The figures are easy to get on that production, of course. And it's still, the oil is still being produced out near Currant Creek. It was a kind of an oddity and a sidelight, and a change in the attitude of petroleum engineers, and engineers in general.

It is always said (and this may be apocryphal, but I don't—I think it may have been said anyway) —Professor J. Claude Jones of the University of Nevada, who was one of the eminent engineering professors there, and I guess a very good reputation elsewhere, said at one time, many, many years ago, that he would drink all the oil that was ever produced in Nevada [chuckles]. Well, there is not much being produced compared of course to a real oil field out in eastern Nevada, but there is several hundred barrels a day, and a person wouldn't be very thirsty if he had to drink all the oil that has even been produced in Nevada now, let alone what I'm sure will be produced someday with the shortages that we have now.

This exploration, incidentally, extended not only—the main part was in White Pine County where the domes and the geology showed there might well be oil, but also as far north as Elko County. Richfield, I know explored considerably in Elko County. But anyway, it was a very exciting time. At the time that they put the great derrick up, or whatever it is—big oil rig up from Meridian Number One (that was Standard and Continental's try at it, out there in the midst of the desert), there was a tremendous amount of people. And of course, we went out and watched as they first began their drilling, you know. I can't recall

the terminology for that now. Mr. Wilcox was able to handle the camera and I wasn't. so he got pictures. I took some pictures [laughs], but they didn't turn out too well.

The excitement of course—. All of these companies established offices in Ely, which was quite a minor boon or boom to the community. For once Kennecott [laughs] wasn't doing it all. But, as I say, it mostly wore out, and they eventually, of course, the oil was discovered where the production is now, in—I think that's northern Nye, right near the White Pine County border.

I'll never forget my reaction when they did discover oil there. But, I guess that oil requires considerable more sophisticated refining than is required say, in the oil that is produced down in the South. But nevertheless, it is oil and can be used and can be refined.

I repeat, I think one of these days somewhere up and down that line in eastern Nevada, there will be a major oil discovery. This, of course, is felt very strongly, for instance by one of the producers out in eastern Nevada now; and that is Mr. [William] Pennington, a former private detective in San Francisco, known as "Peekaboo" at that time. Mr. Pennington is a very dedicated man toward the oil industry, and has a great faith in the fact that Nevada will one day become a major producer of oil. And he is tenacious and knowledgeable about the oil geology of that country, although not a geologist himself.

Editorially, that is from newspaper standpoint, I think those certainly were the two biggest things as far as I was concerned during the four years I was there. Of course, there were many other stories that are difficult to recall now.

WHITE PINE COUNTY COPPER INDUSTRY

Naturally Kennecott—Kennecott Copper Corporation, which operated, and still

operates copper mines at Ruth and refines the copper at McGill, was always a major news source. And what Kennecott did, of course, meant everything to what happened to Ely. Because although there was some ranching around Ely, and perhaps a little minor mining, only Kennecott and Consolidated Coppermines Corporation were major operators.

Then, of course, eventually Consolidated Coppermines, I guess, sold its holdings to Kennecott, and it owned a portion of the Ruth pit—the Liberty pit. Correct name, I think, but nobody in Ely ever calls it that, of course; it's just the Ruth pit. At one time, this pit was called the biggest hole in the ground in the world, and second only to Iron Mountain, Michigan, et cetera, et cetera, which of course was used by the Chamber of Commerce to attempt to beckon visitors. But this pit, as Kennecott expanded it, it expanded over into Consolidated Coppermines area. So therefore Coppermines was getting a portion of the income from it, since it was partly on their property. Eventually, Kennecott took it over. Coppermines, Consolidated Coppermines was closed, and the town of Kimberly, which was near, just west of Ruth, died and was forgotten—a modern day situation which, of course, happened very frequently in the older days of Nevada.

But the death of Kimberly was sort of a sad thing in a way, because, well, number one, it kept Kennecott—well, it, it added so much to the Ely economy. Then, of course, they used to have a train that ran down into the pit, ore train. That was a great sight, tourist-wise and so on. The people even around Ely would go up every once in a while and watch the train go down the sides of the pit, and they'd load and come back up around the pit. The train proved too expensive, and Kennecott eventually eliminated the train

and used a great sort of a haul and dredge situation. I couldn't begin to explain it from an engineering viewpoint. But they sent these bins I guess they were; they would shoot them down into the bottom of the pit, load 'em up, and zing, they'd haul them right back up to the top. They could do that so quickly that it eliminated the use of the train.

Ely, one of the, not oddities, but one of the facts of life, at least, about Ely from a social viewpoint, was the social strata, I guess you'd say, in Ely. It's sort of a hangover, say, from the days of Virginia City and so on when there were those (the bluebloods as it were), and then there were the other folks, and then there were still the other folks; and Ely was pretty much like that, and of course, the pinnacle of the social life of Ely was the general manager of Kennecott, who lived in McGill. At the time I was there, that was Walter Larsh, a very kindly man, with whom I became well acquainted. But, then of course, the rest of the Ely social upper crust, shall we say? [laughs] included a couple of other high officials in Kennecott of course, the superintendent of the pit, and superintendent of the mill, and the mine, and so on. Then in Ely, the power company officials, or official at least, who was Thomas A. Smith; Harry Beam, who was superintendent of the Nevada Northern; perhaps Pete Peterson, that's Harold M. Peterson, who is now superintendent; and Walter Armstrong (now a resident of Reno) of the railroad; and then a few top businessmen around Ely. And usually when you went to a party, or any kind of a shindig of that nature that was private, why, there'd be this particular sprinkling, and they would usually be about the same people. And of course, that social situation existed within Kennecott itself over at McGill. The general manager had the mansion. Behind the mansion was the second home (which was very nice, but not

comparable to the general manager's home), was the superintendent of the mill, I suppose. (And I've forgotten which way it went.) And then next would be the superintendent of the smelter. And there is a row, of course, of houses there, and that was known as, I think, "The Row," or something like that [laughs], I've forgotten, in McGill which, of course, is twelve miles north of Ely.

News-wise of course, Riepetown, which was really the lower crust of Consolidated Coppermines, and was located down under Kimberly a short distance on the way to Ruth, the highway and so on to Ely. Riepetown was a wild and woolly place, even as late as when I was there. And there was a murder up there every so often. The owner of the store, John Dotta, I think; John Dotta operated the store, and at one time we had a big story when Dotta was kidnapped, and his feet burned by his kidnappers to force him to tell— to tell where a great fortune was buried under his store. I don't think he had it there. I'm not sure. But, at any rate—. It's a little vague now in my memory. But, of course, this was an FBI matter. I've forgotten how the FBI got into it. There was an interstate situation somewhere, so that the FBI could get into it. And they were going to come back and get Dotta. And Dotta informed the police, and the police the FBI, and they had FBI agents out in the road. In the dark of the night, these fellows came back, and the FBI and sheriff's department all descended on them at once, and I think there was a kind of a shootout. I think one of them, at least one of these kidnappers was killed. That, as far as I was concerned, was the last big western [laughs] event, as far as the news was concerned. That was sort of the O.K. Corral a la Ely area.

Riepetown was really, and had been even before (it was a little bit larger in Consolidated Coppermines heyday), really was a wild and

woolly spot, as I've mentioned. And there were killings, fights, and oh boy, it was really a place at night. I recall that when I first went to work for the *Gazette*, before I was in Ely, I think Julian Epperson or Jack Myles, one of the two, was then manager of the *Ely Daily Times*, editor-manager of the *Ely Daily Times*. But, in the *Gazette* newsroom, you would come down in the morning, and about once a week there'd be a telegram, from Epperson say, stating "One man killed, three shot in shootout at Riepetown today. The dead were identified as so on and so on and so on." So anyway, John Sanford, the city editor then of the *Gazette* would say, "Well, another killing at Riepetown." Someone else would yawn and say, "Well, so what else is new this morning?" [Laughs] That was Riepetown.

Back to the social strata. Of course, there was not only the upper crust (which I guess you could call it, or they considered themselves such, anyway) which might have a mix ethnically, I guess you would say, but depended solely upon—not solely, but majorly upon income. Beside that, of course, at one time they had had at, I think at McGill they had a Japtown and a Greek, well, Greektown was it called? Yeah. Of course, there weren't very many when I was there. There were practically no Orientals in Ely. There were about, in the whole area, there were perhaps half a dozen Blacks. But of course, one of the social stratas, as it were, was the division according to nationality rather than—what would you, I don't know whether you would say [laughs] that was one perpendicular and one horizontal or not. But of course the "Greektown"—now I don't—this title was gone and I've only heard of it. But you never heard of it in the four years that I was in Ely as far as Greeks were concerned. There were a few Greeks there, and in fact they were a very substantial group although very small;

and some of them, let's see, some of those are here. Oh, for instance, a very well-known Reno attorney now, and others have from Ely or from McGill (this is mainly McGill I'm talking about); Ely of course, did not have the individual "towns," as it were, I recall. But a bigger population than the Greeks were what would now be Yugoslavs, I guess. And there were many, many of them, and they were very prominent, very good. I mean very hard working, producing folks at McGill.

In my time, the youngsters were excellent athletes. I was trying to think of some of the names. One was a marvelous pole vaulter and held the state record, for instance. They had good basketball teams, and many of them were "hunkies," as they were called. But their divisions, I think, had been watered down considerably. During the four years I lived in Ely, I think there was more mix then, I'm sure. But it is true at one time, they actually lived in separate sections, I guess, in McGill.

Incidentally, the living quarters, getting away from that specifically, the workmen who lived in McGill, or at least the minor officials and so on—there were many, many homes, and they were just plain, square homes, but they were warm and they were well-insulated, I guess; and if they weren't it didn't make any difference to those residing there, because the company rented them to its people for about twenty dollars a month, for a substantial home, which even then was ridiculously low. That's twenty what, twenty-five, twenty-seven years ago. Kennecott, I'm sure employed this ploy [chuckles], as it were, in order to hold its people even against offers of better pay and better salary, for the junior engineers and all that sort of thing, that might be offered by someone else. A man and wife talking it over (you can visualize them) would say, "Well, yes we're going to get fifty dollars a month more, but look what we have to pay for rent. Here

our rent is practically free.” And they not only got the rent, but my recollection is they got the power, they got everything. Everything was taken care of so your salary outside of what you had to give Uncle was practically cream. So it made for a good situation as far as Kennecott was concerned. They managed that way to hold on to their good men. Eventually, of course, Kennecott sold off all those homes, and this is long gone now. It’s been a number of years, I guess, since they sold all those homes. And the people either had to buy them or move into Ely and then commute or whatever—the engineers and so on.

During the four years that I ran the paper in Ely, we had a very—it was in a sense a lucky four years as far as Ely itself was concerned, because in all that time although there was the great ruckus concerning union representation, and all of that sort of thing—actually in those four years there was never a strike, from, that would be 1947, ’48, ’49, and ’50. However, there were threats of a strike. And I learned what a strike meant to Ely, or what shutting—anytime that Kennecott Copper Corporation shut down, what it would mean, because once we were right, the negotiations had broken down momentarily (I guess at that time that would’ve been between International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers and, of course, Kennecott management), and well, we were just on the verge of the strike.

And I’ll never forget coming down to work the morning when it appeared that there was definitely going to be a strike. You could look down Aultman Street, the main street, and it didn’t look—. My recollection is now there weren’t more’n a half a dozen cars to be seen, hardly anyone on the sidewalks walking, business practically at a standstill, and yet there was not even an actual strike. So seeing that, I wondered, well, if that’s the situation, how bad is it going to be if there

actually is a strike? They settled it about that day or within a day or so there, of that time. And business went back to normal, and everybody went about his daily chores, and everything was fine. Since that time, of course, there have been strikes, I guess, since I’ve left Ely. There have been strikes, and there had been before, and they’d either been—. Way back, they’ve been put down, I’d guess you’d say or whatever. But at the time I was there, there was not a strike.

The biggest thing concerning labor, at that time, was more an inter-union battle, I guess, to see who would be the union representative at McGill, and Ruth, I guess, both—at the pit and at the mine, mill and smelter; that is the mill and smelter at McGill. When I came there of course, it was the Mine-Mill that were the representatives, and they were pretty hard-driving, arm-waving type of a union. And, of course, the business people in Ely were very upset by some of Mine-Mill’s hard-pressing and arm-waving declarations that if they didn’t get exactly what they wanted, why, they were gonna take the workers out on strike.

Eventually, and I don’t exactly know the background on what happened, but all of a sudden, as far as the newspaper’s concerned, we learned that the steelworkers union (I don’t know the exact name of the steelworkers union, United Steelworkers of America or something like that) came in and challenged the Mine-Mill (IUMMSW) for jurisdiction there. And that was a touch and go situation for quite some time, although my recollection now is that the people in Ely proper sort of looked at this situation from afar [chuckles] more than—. That is, they were highly interested in what was going on, but it was not nearly the same thing as a confrontation between the management and the representative union. Eventually, the steelworkers actually—in a vote, the

steelworkers, I think won, and took over as the union representatives at McGill. How long they lasted, I don't know, but I don't think it was too long until Mine-Mill was back in again. And I guess Mine-Mill is still in.

I would certainly like to remember the name of the [laughs] Mine-Mill man who was, of course, imported, and of course, that was used considerably because he was; and yet the Steelworkers also brought people in to fight to gain union control. But this one man (perhaps you can find the name) was a very intelligent fellow, and knew the union business. And of course, one of the things that happened at the time, as the recollection, was that there was a considerable feeling (I don't believe any proof that I can remember) that Mine-Mill had Communist infiltrations, and that of course, probably, is one of the things that brought the more conservative Steelworkers into power there. I don't know for a fact that there was a Communistic influence in there, although it seems to me that in the national press that Mine-Mill had been—that there had been some infiltration at the time. This man that I speak of, I don't believe there was ever any proof at all that he had anything to do with the Communists. But, I know one thing, he waved his arms and screamed when he wanted to do that, and he played it cool when he wanted to do that, and he was [chuckles] really a tough, a real tough character, but a very good news source because he would give his side of the battle between the Mine-Mill and the Steelworkers in a much better—news-wise anyway, he was a much better source than the Steelworkers who had a kind of a conservative approach as unions go anyway. so, when you really wanted to find out what's going on in the battle, and how the situation was, and whether or not there was going to be a meeting, and who was going to talk, and all this sort of thing, why you got ahold of this

Mine-Mill man, and he would give you the straight scoop as to what was going to happen.

I mentioned that there were some accusations of Communism and so forth. You wonder if I wanted to expand on any of that sort of thing. Well, I can't think of [laughs] any. I guess you could say as far as the "Red" baiting was concerned, I don't think, I can't recall there was anything—. Of course, the people there, and naturally the people in Ely proper, and I suppose in all the surrounding towns were very disturbed by the reports of Reds (as they were called; now they don't seem to call them that any more) in the Mine-Mill union. But, I don't, I can't recall that there was any extension of that. Of course, I've been a Democrat all my life, and of course, so was Governor Pittman, who owned the newspaper; and so, as a rule, are the majority of people in Ely—probably a bigger majority of Democrats as to Republicans in Ely and the Ely area than anywhere else in the state. The ratio would be bigger, I suppose, and I think it still is.

Once in a while a Republican can get elected in White Pine County, but not too often. [Charlie Gallagher anyway.] Yes, Charlie Gallagher, who was beloved by everyone, and who was an exceptional legislator, and who became quite a big power in the state legislature before the days of reapportionment came to pass.

Back on the business end, however, that is, as far as management and the union (whichever union) were concerned, they seemed to get along pretty well during the four years I was there. And I think probably if you really look at the labor-management battles in the United States, that the Nevada Mines Division and the unions probably got along on the average a great deal better than they did in the big communities and so on. Of course, as has been mentioned, Ely had

perhaps thirty-five hundred, four thousand people, couple of thousand people in McGill, another fifteen hundred, or something like that at Ruth. I don't know, those are very, very rough figures, but when you added it all up you still (and took in the entire copper community) had so few people, and they had so many interrelated situations.

Workers at the smelter in McGill might have an uncle who ran a big store in Ely. It was a kind of an interrelationship that made it pretty difficult [laughs] to have a real, tough confrontation. Somebody was always saying, "Well, now let's kind of smooth it down here," and so on. And of course, when there was trouble brewing (which was one case I just related for instance), the stores in Ely would automatically go right ahead and sell without getting any payment. That is, they'd put people on credit, and so on, and sometimes that went on for quite a little while. And then whatever trouble had been on the horizon, vanished, why they'd pay their bills and everything would get back on an even keel.

But, it is, of course, the only time I've ever been in what you might call a union town—although Ely, itself was not; but by virtue of the fact that McGill and Ruth supported it, it was a union town. It was a kind of an eye opener as to what it must be like in many, many places outside of the state of Nevada. And I guess, really, Ely is the only modern-day town that is a union town. I don't know of any other in Nevada. Naturally, in the old days there were, and they had terrible, terrible battles and so on, I guess. But we weren't around then I don't think. I'm thinking of, say, since '20s and on, somewhere in there, post World War I and on.

It was, as far as I personally was concerned, of course, it was one of the things in my career as a newspaper man that was very, very helpful, and the fact that I had lived in

Ely and knew Ely, and knew the tenor there, eventually helped me in later years as an editor. And of course, just the very fact that Ely is one of the big areas and is so important to the state, in itself helped me, because when I came to Reno somebody would—I recognized all the names for years and so on, that is the top names in whatever endeavor you speak of at White Pine County from some ranching through the copper industry and all that sort of thing. I knew the background, and so I could write about it, once I was removed by 300 miles over to Reno; there weren't very many other people who could by this time, who were still in the newspaper business. So, from that viewpoint, it was very, very good training to have run Vail Pittman's newspaper.

You asked about the Taft-Hartley act, and the coverage of national news being so complete, and thought that perhaps the people had a stronger reaction in Ely than they might have somewhere else. They must have, because, of course, Taft-Hartley probably affected Ely more than any other town in Nevada. I don't recall, though, that there was any great to-do when the Taft-Hartley act passed. And then when the right-to-work, the Nevada right-to-work bill passed—. When did you say that was, in '49 or '50? That was, yeah, the rodeo, strike at rodeo time, and that was then on the Fourth of July. Well, that motivated the passage of the right-to-work law.

I surely thought I was on the paper here [Reno] when the right-to-work law passed. I guess we must have been visiting here, because we were here during the great Fourth of July, as you call it, the rodeo, when the service personnel struck right during the Reno rodeo, just before. Because I remember going to the Riverside Hotel and the bartenders were some of the town's leading businessmen, and bankers, and [laughs]

millionaires. The Riverside was very busy, and they were putting the drinks out. And Gwen would probably remember if that was a visit. It must've been, because we'd probably come over here, perhaps to talk to the governor about business as well as be here during that time.

But, back to Ely. I'm sure by the time the right-to-work bill went through the legislature, I had left Ely, so I'm not at all cognizant of what happened or what their attitude was there. I missed some of those things, like missing the invasion of Leyte [laughs].

THE NEWSPAPER

A few words about the production of the *Ely Daily Times* might be of some interest. The *Times* was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Pittman, I think in about 1921, somewhere in there. And, I recall Mrs. Pittman telling me about a flood. Ely was always threatened by a flood, possibility of a flood, or a flood coming down the canyons. And at one time, there was a cloudburst or something of that nature up in the hills, either the Robinson Canyon or the flurry Street Canyon, the water came rushing down and smashed into the *Times* office, among other buildings and so on. And it came right through their building. The building was in a different location, the *Times* was then, than it is the present day. I guess as a result of this flood, and Mrs. Pittman said at one time that the water was so deep and rushing so fast that she had to grab hold of a piece of machinery, like a linotype arm or something like that, to keep from getting carried right on through to the back of the building and, perhaps drown. So the Pittmans had their difficulties in operating the *Times*.

At the time I came and took over the *Times*, we had an old Duplex press, which was

the most cantankerous piece of machinery you can imagine. The web would invariably break as you started the run. The first papers off the press went to Ruth and McGill. And we tried to get the *Times* out in time to put the papers on the school bus as the kids came out of White Pine High, but it seemed that so often just as you were about ready to say, "Well, we've got a few minutes and we're gonna be able to catch the bus," you'd start up the press and the web would break, the web being—well, I guess there's no use describing the web. Eventually, this was happening so often that I finally got in touch with the governor and said, "We've just got to have somebody look over this press to see why the web breaks," because the people running it just didn't have any idea why. So we called in an expert pressman from Salt Lake City. (Wish I could remember his name. He was a German, German derivation, talked with quite an accent, as a matter of fact. But he was the greatest expert on presses in the inter-mountain area, I guess.) And he came in and looked the old Duplex over, and decided (and rightly so as matters eventuated) that the press was out of line, and therefore when the roller came to pick up the paper, it would snap the paper out of the web and break the web, and the reason was that there was a big drive wheel inside of the Duplex, and it was apparently down a little bit. So he—I've forgotten now how in the world we kept getting the paper out. I think we got him in there on a Saturday, and as soon as the paper was out, he tore this press apart, jacked it up or whatever it was he did and repaired it, and we had it ready, I guess, by Monday afternoon to print the paper again. And we caught the school buses considerably more regularly after that, because, of course, he fixed the press so that the web would not break, or if it did, it was very rare.

Paper, of course—newsprint we had to buy only about two rolls at a time, because at the *Times* we had no place to store. So as soon as we got down low, fairly low on the second roll, why then we'd order two more, and Interstate Motor Lines would bring in two more rolls from Salt Lake. And that process just kept repeating itself because there was no storage for, say, buying a half a dozen rolls, or some such amount.

When we missed the buses, of course, we were provided by the governor with an ancient, little Ford V-8 coupe, and we would load the papers into it. And if we missed both ways, Gwen or someone else would jump in this little car (or I would, or whoever) and deliver the *Times* up to Ruth. [Laughs] This little Ford ran pretty well really, except that there was a hole in the floorboard, and in the wintertime or anytime [laughs] when there was precipitation about, it would throw the water up through the hole in the floor board in the *Times* Ford, as it was always called: "Take the *Times* Ford," you know. "You'll have to take the *Times* Ford." And we always left it parked out in back. We didn't run it except for emergency purposes as a rule.

And one day, one morning I came down to work, and we had just hired this man by the name of White. He had come in and applied, and I had just lost the city editor or he'd given notice, I've forgotten. And so we hired this White, who was a drifter, sort of, and who said that his uncle was the society editor of the *New York Herald-Tribune*. He obviously knew how to put the paper out. There was no question about that. He could do that very well. He did so, for, oh, several weeks; it could've been even months. One morning, I came down to work, and as I unlocked the front door and went in, there was a typewriter missing. And I thought, "Where in the world's that typewriter?" We didn't have anyone take it out to work it over or

anything that I could think of. And I thought, "That's peculiar, but maybe someone had done so. Even Mr. White might," I thought, "have taken it home." So then, I think I had a little chore to do out in East Ely or something, so I went out the back way to get into the *Times* Ford, and it wasn't there. So then I went back in and said, "Where's the *Times* Ford?" By this time, other folks had come in, no one knew. It was getting time for Mr. White to come to work, and he didn't show up. So, putting two and two [laughs] as it were, together, we decided what had happened was that Mr. White had taken the *Times* Ford and loaded a typewriter or two into it, or I've forgotten what other—. I don't believe there was anything missing in the cash box as, of course, it went into the safe; and the safe had not been blown or anything of that nature.

So I called the police, and they didn't know anything about it, and so on. And we couldn't find out what in the world happened except that we were pretty sure, naturally, that there was a tie-up between the missing *Times* Ford and Mr. White. So, I called the FBI agent, whose name was Hy Callister, T. H. Callister. (Later, I think he worked here, and then went, finally went down to Coronado, where he was in the FBI office in San Diego, then retired. A very fine, and very astute character, this T. H. Callister.) So he said, "Well, we'll see what we can find out." Took all the information down. They found the *Times* Ford parked on a side street in Oakland, the FBI did. And Hy Callister came in to inform me of this one day, and I said, "Well, that's fine. Is it runnable?" And he said, "Yes." So, I've forgotten how, but I guess I got someone down there, and they drove the *Times* Ford all the way back to Ely. So we recovered the Ford. Then a considerable amount of time went by, and fly Callister came in one day and said, "Well, we've located your Mr. White."

“Oh, that’s great. Bring the so-and-so in and we’ll prosecute him.

Hy said, “Well Paul, he’s in Canada.” [Laughs] “So,” he said, “you’d have to extradite him, and you’d have to go to all this trouble.” He said, “I just wonder if you think you oughta do that.”

And I said, “No, I don’t think so.”

So that was the last we ever heard of Mr. White. And we did get the *Times* Ford back. And it was just one of those little things that happened in Ely.

Did I get the typewriter back? I don’t think so. No. I don’t remember, but I don’t think so. I think he hocked it someplace for five dollars probably, enough to buy gasoline to keep going, I suppose.

Maybe I oughta say a word about the heating system. Heating the *Times* building (the furnace was in what passed for a basement, actually a cellar, down at the back end of the *Times*), you’d fire up the furnace, and then there was a duct, of course, that ran along the ceiling, with vents, I suppose, you know, up toward the front. Well, by the time, you got up to the front of the *Times*, there was practically no heat at all, so it was always cold in the wintertime, and everybody wore heavy clothing whenever it got very cold, and it gets very cold in Ely. I had a little office right at the window in the front, with an old roll-top desk, and many’s the time all day long, I would wear a full-blown overcoat, and I’d work at that desk in an overcoat. I brought this to the attention of the governor who said, “Well, guess that furnace is about gone.” But as far as I know, by the time I left—same old furnace. We might’ve gotten a blower. I think we did do something that helped warm it up to some extent. It was a very, very, old inactive furnace.

As far as the makeup of the paper is concerned and the fact as you have noted in looking at the *Ely Times* in comparison

to the *Elko Free Press*, and the fact there’s a great deal more national news, and that the national news was featured on page one, there’s a kind of a physical necessity there as well as possibility that people were interested more in national and international news in Ely than they were in Elko. There’s another reason, and that is that we had the operation of the newspaper itself, to make it survive, required pressing more, pressing harder for advertising, which took up the time, for instance, of myself. Most of the time was spent getting advertising and handling the general business of the *Times*. And we had one person who then got out the paper, went over to the sheriff’s office on a dead run and back again, and so on, as opposed to the time when I was in Elko when we got a few, short, Western Union messages from which to build a national and international news.

In Ely we had the United Press teletype, which rolled the news out by the gross. So, if you couldn’t, if you didn’t have very much time [laughs], you just ripped it off, and put a headline on it, and that’s the way it was in the paper. And so therefore, there was a great deal less local news, because there was a great deal less time to gather local news. Somehow it seems—. In Elko where you got the local news, because you were forced to do so, and besides there were basically three people who gathered news. Well, you could say in Ely, perhaps that the bookkeeper (June Lamprey, most of the time when I was there, who handled the books) wrote maybe a little bit of social news, but not very much.

So the very business of getting the *Times* out resulted in the running of a great deal of national and international news, when as a matter of fact, I think, if we’d have just had one reporter as well as one telegraph editor, or if I had been able to get out and scrounge around and get the local news, rather than

getting the money in, as it were [laughs] , it would've been a better newspaper, because there were things happening in Ely surely, as you say, that we did not—. If we heard a rumor sometimes we could check it out and we would if we could, but mostly it was getting the paper out, you know.

And of course, I had a great deal of anxiety along this line, because naturally the Pittmans were concerned about the paper from their governor's mansion in Carson City, as to its survival while Mr. Pittman was governor. Although I think when I was there, my actual gross, as far as the newspaper was concerned, was higher than at any time that the Pittmans operated it. But, maybe it wasn't as good a paper as when Mrs. Pittman, for instance, was there, really getting all the little tidbits, and when Vail was writing editorials. Incidentally, I even had a very difficult time getting a local editorial in now and then, because time would just run out on you during the day, 'cause there was actually just one reporter, who was also the city editor. I was the advertising manager, because that was where the money was and that was the thing—and the Pittmans wouldn't support more staff. No, I couldn't possibly have hired someone else, you know [laughs]. You'd have had to pay them forty dollars a week or something. I've forgotten what was the going rate.

But, we did have some very, very good men who handled the reportorial job and the job as telegraph editor combined. And particularly one was Galen Rarick. Galen Rarick was an outstanding newspaper man. He graduated from the University of Denver, and he is now professor of journalism at Ohio State, Dr. Galen Rarick now. He went on to operate his own newspaper in the South. But, he was a very frail young man. And eventually went into teaching journalism at Cal, I think. I guess he got his masters at Stanford, and then

taught at Cal, and then went back East, and ran this paper in the South and so on. But, he's quite a well-known journalism professor in this general field now. We exchange Christmas cards, still, after all these years.

One of his outstanding attributes was his ability to cover a football game. He, of course, never played football. If he'd been in one football game, he'd have gotten broken in four places. But he was a student of football. And he would go cover a game, the White Pine Bobcats versus the Elko Indians, or whatever, and his reporting of a football game was just, why it sounded just like the biggest sports editor of the *Chicago Tribune* doing it, you know. [Laughs] But it was mainly because it was a hobby. So he was great in that sort of thing. He was actually an excellent reporter. But of course, he wasn't there all the time that I was in Ely.

I had at least a couple of others whose names I can't recall offhand now. Must've had at least three "city editors," we called 'em. But the same thing was true with Galen Rarick as the other reporters; they were alone and they didn't have much time! And, I guess I would take over the telegraph when Galen, or whoever the editor was, went out to cover a sports event, for instance. And as you say, you could find the sports, but many other things that occurred in Ely, were not reported, I'm sure.

The staff consisted of a proofreader—I did have a proofreader. At one time, gee, there was a veteran schoolteacher who proofread for us. I believe her name was Buckmaster, Marie Buckmaster, I think. And the reason I mention her, she'd been a teacher; she was a veteran teacher, and by this time an elderly woman, and knew the English language backward and forward. She was the greatest proofreader you could possibly get. She straightened all our copy out, and besides

that, she knew the area, and knew something about everything, which was very good. And the rest of the staff, perhaps I might as well finish at least the staff. Beside her, by the way, there was Dorothy Echeverry (now Jensen) who was a youngster, but a very, very fine employee. That consisted of proofreaders as far as I can remember.

Then, of course, there was the city editor who was also the reporter, whoever he might be. And as I mentioned before three or four of those during the four years.

There was June Lamprey who handled the books, and who was a character in her own right. She was a great horsewoman and so on, and helped organize a riding club in Ely, which they had never had in Ely before, I don't suppose.

Then of course there was a Linotype operator. And I had a great character there. He was a marvelous Linotype operator, but was inclined to get into a fight with "demon rum" every so often. His name was George Hare. And George Hare arrived in Ely one day as the *Ely Record* had just lost its Linotype operator; and as he later told me, "Well, Paul," he said, "I came into Ely and I thought, well, they need somebody to get this week's paper out, so I sat down at the Linotype and got the paper out." And he could set type, just "hang it on every line," as they say about Linotype operators. And he said, "I thought, well, I might as well finish the shift, and maybe even, soon as I get the paper out, be on my way." He said, "That was eight years ago, and I'm still here." Or whatever the time, something like that.

Our apprentice was Richard DiCianno, who later came to Reno, was a printer here, and when the Linotypes went out the window, and so on—Richard now works in the computer department or something down at Reno newspapers. He's done very well.

We also had a man to handle the job work, which consisted mainly of Kennecott jobs, printing jobs for Kennecott, printing forms for Kennecott, and printing Keno tickets for the Bank Club, with, of course, the usual sprinkling of other job work. A very elderly man (I'll remember his name later, I'm sure) handled this work. And then there was a regular journeyman-type printer.

Prior to George Hare, the operator was Tom Dennis, who went to Salt Lake City, and retired there after spending many, many years at the Linotype.

We had a young man who was a garageman, who could also help. So if worse came to worst (which it often did, and you absolutely wondered how you were gonna get the paper out), I would get in the *Times* Ford and run down toward the garage where he worked and say, "Jerry, can you come up and give us a hand? So-and-so's left and we haven't got any way to get the type out," and he would come up and get the paper out. And that was the—everything just sort of hanging in the balance, almost week after week after week. You were never sure. Mr. Dennis, for instance, got in a fight with someone else, and said, "I quit," and he was gone. But he remains a very, very good friend of ours to this day, Tom Dennis, as he was a very faithful employee, but little bit on the emotional side, I guess [laughs]—temperamental.

Besides the newsboys, we had newsgirls, deliver the *Times*. I had one newsboy who delivered on horseback, delivered his route out in East Ely, I think, on horseback. Usually, however, bicycles were utilized. Some of them—we had two girls who delivered, who were sisters. One of them became a dentist—yes, a dentist, I'm pretty sure. And the other came to Reno and operated a big beauty parlor for a long time. So they turned out quite well—Greek girls. That about takes care,

I guess, of the personnel, and the production, of course. And the production, as I say, was always a kind of a touch-and-go situation what with the press running poorly, and employees coming and going, and stealing [laughs].

I never had a thing stolen except when we hired Mr. White. Incidentally, I might add that in checking back I pointed out to Hy Callister that this fellow had said his uncle was the society editor of the *New York Herald Tribune*, so Hy Callister took that down and checked with the FBI in New York, and sure enough; the FBI sent a man to talk to Mr. White, who was the society editor of the *New York Herald Tribune*. He was not an uncle, but he said, "You know, I've got a relative, he's a kind of a distant cousin, by that name," and described him, and it was probable that, actually, he did have a family connection with the editor of the *New York Herald Tribune* [laughs].

CITIZENS OF ELY

About Ely—I was there about, as I said I was there four years; Gwen and I were. And we had really a great time, socially. It isn't boasting because it's a simple fact that we were invited to these places where the community social leaders were; that is, to their parties, and their homes, and so on and so forth for the simple reason I was editor of the paper. An editor [laughs] may sometimes move into a situation where he's automatically elevated. (Whether it's true now or not I'm not sure. Maybe it gets less so every year.) But, being the editor, why we were invited to these places and so on, and became acquainted with people in the Ely area; the businessmen, the mayor—. Incidentally, while we were there, N. E. Broadbent was the mayor. He operated a drugstore in the Nevada Hotel, all the time I was there, which is now long since gone of

course, and they expanded the hotel into the drugstore space.

And speaking of pharmacies, might interject here that in the high social standing, of course, in the community were the doctors, particularly Steptoe Valley hospital, which was a Kennecott hospital, actually. During our stay in Ely, Walter Frohlich, Dr. Walter Frohlich, was the chief surgeon at Steptoe. Dr. Ted Ross was the deputy chief surgeon, I guess, and later became surgeon and following that, eventually moved to Carson Valley, where he bought a home up on the ridge there, and practiced there until he died, Dr. Ross. Also there was Dr. Noah Smernoff, who is now, of course, a very well-known Reno doctor. He's been in practice here now for twenty some years I guess, who is our family doctor, by the way. And it was Dr. Smernoff who (this is sort of an aside) discovered a "something" on my lung which put me in the hospital, and during which time Gwen ran the newspaper. Eventually, I got over that affliction at the Veteran's Hospital in Salt Lake, and returned (probably to the discomfort and disgust of the people working for the *Ely Daily Times*, because I think they kind of thought Gwen was doing a better job than I was [laughs]).

Also included, of course, among the prominent doctors—and at that time I think, that all of the doctors were connected with the mining companies, at the time we first went there—that is the M.D.'s. Stationed not at Steptoe, but over at McGill was Dr. William B. Ririe. And later of course, the big hospital there in Ely, I guess, is the William B. Ririe hospital, so dedicated just a couple of years ago I guess.

Oh yes, and Dr. O. Hovenden. In fact, I got in some sort of an argument, long since forgotten the basis of it on Dr. Hovenden, because he wouldn't give me the name of someone who was involved in something,

that he had treated. “Hovey.” [Laughs] Yeah, that’s true.

Then for Consolidated Coppermines, the chief surgeon there was Dr. Walter Quinn, who just died day before yesterday [December 8, 1975], and whose funeral we’re going to at one o’clock. Dr. Quinn was an exceptional surgeon, and very, very great on head injuries, although he did not practice neurosurgery as such. The reason, he told me himself one time, I think; I think Dr. Quinn told me that he was able to do pretty well on head injuries because he’d been a mining doctor for so long, and the rocks dropping and all that sort of thing, on miners’ heads and so on, that he just had lots and lots, and lots of practice at it. But, of course, otherwise he was generally a very fine surgeon anyway.

And on the distaff side of active people in Ely of course, there was Mrs. Vail Pittman, who was really the business manager of the *Ely Daily Times* until her husband moved from lieutenant governor to governor. And then, of course, Mrs. Pittman left. I was not there when she was. Except they naturally came back for visits to look over the books, and that sort of thing. But Mrs. Pittman had been very active both in the business world of Ely itself, and in the social structure also.

Then there was Mrs. Thomas A. Smith, that’s Marge Smith, who, following the death of her husband, in fact quite a little after that, moved to Reno, now resides in Reno. Marge was particularly active in the social world of the Ely area.

Effie Read wrote a, what would you call that? It’s hard to say. *White Pine Lang Syne* [was the title]. Yes, I remember. I remember, yes [laughs]. But it was sort of a, something of a history, I guess, or that sort of thing.

In the business world in Ely, there were very many women, quite a number anyway, who actually handled a considerable amount

of the business dealings in the city of Ely. Alice Anderson operated a dress shop. Lucille Baird was in the dress shop business. Mrs. Wayne Seacrist was an assistant to her husband, who was at that time, manager of the Sprouse-Reitz store, and she was a very, very sharp business woman.

On the cultural side of the situation, there, was Nan Millard (Mrs. Frank Millard), who was active in numerous projects in Ely, along the development of the culture in the past and so on, of the city and the general community. And Mary Armstrong (that’s Mrs. Walter Armstrong, now resident of Reno), was one of the leaders in establishing the new library in Ely, new city library. That, I can testify to, was needed for, at the time that I was there, first there at least. I visited the city library and I—well, I guess they’d gone to the Dewey decimal by then, but before that, not long before that, the librarian was filing the books according to size and by the alphabet as I remember; something like that. It became very difficult to find out where something was. So the people who pushed the library, including Mrs. Armstrong of course, were doing a noble service for the community.

Very active in business too, getting back to that, was Dorothy Collins, Mrs. Frank Collins, whose son Jon graduated from law school, became a lawyer there, then was named to the Supreme Court; served on the Supreme Court of the state of Nevada for quite a long time, eventually resigning and moving to Las Vegas, in the private practice of law. Dorothy, his mother, and Frank operated the Collins Hotel which was right in the heart of Ely, on Aultman Street—the main street. I think probably that Dorothy was the one who really handled the business. She was a very, very good businesswoman, and with that a very, very pleasant personality. She had a little trouble at the Collins [hotel]. As time went

on, it deteriorated a little bit, so the clientele was not quite what you'd have at the Nevada Hotel or one of the new motels that were now coming up in Ely, and which I suppose, made it very difficult even for the Nevada [hotel], because there are several pretty nice motels there.

I did not know her, of course, at the time except on one occasion, but one person who came out of Ely that came into national prominence (one woman came into *high* national prominence) was Helen Delich, married, apparently, in the East (a man by the name of Bentley). Helen Delich Bentley, and she was appointed by President Nixon to be chairman of the National Maritime Commission. This appointment came because of her knowledge of maritime affairs through her reporting in covering the waterfront for the *Baltimore Sun*. Mrs. Bentley has gained quite a reputation in the press for her sharp comebacks, and acid tongue, I might say. But she—is she still—? I guess she resigned. But she served there for several years, didn't she? Of course, everyone was very proud of her, I presume, in Ely, although her appointment to that big post, of course, came along after I'd left. But there were functions for her when she came here to Reno, by Ely people; and her parents, or her mother, at least I believe lives in Carson City.

Undoubtedly, I've left out any number of women who contributed to Ely and made it a much more pleasant place to live as well as handling a great deal of the business volume in the city. Maybe more'll come to me as I go along.

Would I like to characterize some of the politicians of the Ely and White Pine area? I'll try to do that if I can bring them to mind. Mayor Broadbent was a very soft-spoken man, a very reasonable sort of a fellow. And he operated a pharmacy, a drugstore in the

Nevada Hotel. And as both the mayor and one of the advertisers, I, of course, saw him almost every day; besides which, the *Ely Times* being only a block from the Nevada Hotel where the drugstore was located, made a very convenient place to go see the mayor. And I think that Mayor Broadbent was *very* well liked by the voters, and by the people of Ely. And he must've served for perhaps, at least two, maybe three terms, I would say. Maybe three. And incidentally, his son went on to become mayor of, or chairman of the commission, or whatever it might be, in Boulder City, and then was a candidate for lieutenant governor.

Tom McLaughlin was the sheriff at the time, sheriff of White Pine County. I don't think that Tom could be exactly compared with several other law enforcement officers, either in Ely at that time or before, but he was the sheriff; worked hard I guess. Don't believe he ever got into any trouble, so— [laughs]. But he was sheriff all the time I was there.

Legislators, I knew several. Particularly I remember one man that I used to sell advertising to each week; ran a grocery store out in east Ely. His name was Ross Prince, or more properly, Rawson. Ross Prince was later elected to the legislature, and still has some connections with the state government, I think. But I can't remember now if he's still in the assembly.

Further back, of course, there was Charlie Gallagher, who was Ely's photographer, who never told anyone how old he was [laughs] . But there were many guesses. But he was an outstanding—. Charlie Gallagher was really an outstanding man. Well of course, in Ely if you wanted to have your picture, if you wanted to get a picture of the family, or your portrait, or whatever, why, of course you went usually to Charlie Gallagher until he turned the business over to a younger man by the

name of Art Fiedling. Oh, he was really quite a man. Mr. Gallagher served, of course, in the state senate for a considerable amount of time. But I think most of this was after—was it after I was gone? Yes. He was there in the '50's. I left there in '50. But, of course, he was very prominent in the community nevertheless, at that time. When I first went to Ely, come to think of it—I don't know whether I said that Mayor Broadbent was mayor all the time I was there, but he was not; because Charles Gallagher's brother John, was mayor; right I guess, about the end of his term or something. And I'll never forget the story, as I talked to him once, concerning how Ely got its name.

There are several theories, including an officer at Fort Halleck, who came down that way, and various different people; various theories about it. Definiteness seems to have been lost in antiquity I think, but there are some who might challenge that too, and say, why it's very simple. But in any event, Mayor John Gallagher told me the story of it all, one afternoon in his office. He said that—and he, by the way was, I'm sure he was older than Charles, so therefore he could remember back a long, long way. But his story to me was that, where Ely is now located, there was a stage stop known as Featherstone Station. And Featherstone Station was a stage stop for the freight teams hauling goods to the boom camps of Hamilton and Treasure Hill. As such it began to grow until eventually the post office department said they'd put in a post office—a post office where people got their mail. And I don't know, maybe they had to go clear to Cherry Creek. I'm not sure [laughs] So the town board sort of got together and said, "Well, it's a great thing we're gonna have a post office, but the postal department doesn't like the name of Featherstone Station. It's too long. They want something shorter." (You know, I mention incidentally with this town board,

among the members of the town board was Sol Hilp, who's the father of Lester Hilp, late, long time Reno druggist. I don't know who any of the others were on this board. I just remember that John Gallagher, mentioned this.) So they debated the matter, and no one seemed to really have any particular idea of any particular name for this community. So one of the members of the board said, in effect, "Well fellows, nobody else has any name; I have a short name from a man who did me a great favor, and that's Dick Ely." Mayor Gallagher said that Dick Ely had been a highwayman in Montana, and had eventually made his way down to the Ely area, and then on south into the Pioche area. And he had loaned this member of the town board a sum of money (which I have no idea how much) when he was in rather poor straits. And the town board member bailed himself out and paid Ely back, I guess, and said that he'd always had a soft spot in his heart for Ely, who, I guess, had been convicted or arrested in Montana for highway robbery or something of that nature. I guess maybe the Montanans just told him to move on, and so he did [chuckles] . I've no idea, I don't know anything. All I know is this was the story that Mayor John Gallagher told me. And so, a nice short name like Ely, the board voted to name the community Ely. That was the story.

When you asked about it, I said it became a matter of controversy. Oh yes, it did. I think I wrote this either in the paper, or I wrote this story in the *Nevada* magazine at one time, back, well, when I was still in Ely. Probably would have been about '48 or nine or somewhere in there. And my theory, I've forgotten now, it wasn't mine, it was Mayor Gallagher's, but I don't recall whether I quoted Mayor Gallagher in the piece in the *Nevada* magazine, or just told it as a matter of fact. But it was, I'm sure it was Russ Elliott, professor

of history at the University of Nevada, Reno, who told me that I had this entirely wrong. And I can't remember now what his theory is. And every time I see Russ (I saw him just the other night, incidentally), I always think I'm gonna bring it up again. But of course, he, being a historian, probably has a great many more facts on it, and Mayor Gallagher might've been wrong in the first place. But anyway, I think that was the only controversy about it that I remember, and that wasn't necessarily a controversy [laughs]. 'cause I never claimed that that was the way it was.

One thing I might mention, that's strange, and this is not about politicians. We haven't mentioned before because I didn't—. It's about those that have been mentioned, that probably cannot, might, almost, never happen in Nevada again, what with Las Vegas and Reno having such a preponderance of population. And that was, mentioned a short time ago about the fact that Vail Pittman of Ely was a governor of the state of Nevada, and incidentally, he was not only the governor, but editor of a newspaper in one little community; and he was succeeded by Charles H. Russell, who was a resident of Ely, and published a newspaper. The odd part of it being, I've always felt, the striking part almost, was that these two men succeeded each other as governor and they were from one comparatively small—fairly large Nevada-wise, but really small, small communities, way out in the eastern part of the state. Not only that, but later Fred Horlacher was Republican candidate for governor. (I think he was the Republican, or he may have been—.) But also, he ran a butcher shop in Ely. (Just heard his son, incidentally, give a talk at Rotary Club on firsts in Nevada and so on. Very, very interesting. He's a history teacher at Reed [High School, Sparks]—anyway, I believe Fred Horlacher, Junior, 'cause his father is still with

us, although I believe he lives over in Salt Lake or somewhere now.)

Other politicians. County commissioners. They must have been outstanding or my mind must be, must not have been [laughs], because I can't remember about the county commission. Several characters go through my mind, and I can't pin a name on any of them, or the city councils either.

We did talk about some of the characters, didn't we? I had a couple of others. Politically, particularly, was a man by the name of W. L. Tuck. He was an avid political figure in Ely, and I recall particularly one incident. Mr. Tuck was coming up the street, and Gwen was coming the other direction, and she was for Dewey and he was for Harry. And they got into a discussion about it—about the forthcoming election which then was almost upon us, I guess. And Mr. Tuck said, "Why Harry Truman's gonna win this." Well, of course, you know at the time, this was—nobody, even Harry Truman's supporters didn't think he was going to win, but W. L. Tuck thought he was gonna win. So I think Gwen bet him ten dollars, and this was [laughs] quite a big risk at the time, you know. Well, of course, she lost her ten dollars. I don't think she's bet over fifty cents on an election since. But W. L. Tuck was quite a forecaster, and quite an observer. I'll never forget, I was standing just across the street when our first returns came in, from up in Vermont or wherever they do. And wherever it was, Harry Truman was ahead.

Well, in any event, whereas W. L. Tuck was particularly interested in national and international politics, one of those that was interested in the political machinations of Ely was George Hawes, who at that time ran the Dodge agency there. And George was wont to insert little two column by four-inch ads concerning something going on around

the community which he obviously thought needed changing or needed some kind of working over. And George, would invariably brush very close to libel, so you had to watch his copy. And then you had to call George up and say, "George, you can't say this. You might have to prove it." Then George, of course, would often say, "Well, I'll take the responsibility." But, of course, as you know, the laws of libel—if you print something you're just as responsible as the person who put it in. So you had to watch George. I can't recall now any of the particular topics, but usually he was tying into the county commissioners, or the city council, or he was criticizing the chief of police, something of that nature. And George had just a great time with his series of advertisements. Once in a while, of course, why we would quote him in the news, I guess. But eventually, George, I guess he—I can't recall whether he left the Dodge agency there, and moved away. And of course, I believe now he lives down in Carson City. His son is an attorney here.

He served in the legislature. Perhaps two sessions; I know he was down there once. George probably would have been as dedicated a legislator as you'd find in White Pine County at that time. White Pine County did not exactly send giants of the science of politics or legislation to the legislature. George certainly made waves over there, to my recollection. I've forgotten just when he went, whether he, I guess it was during the time that I was there, in Ely.

Ely had its share of character-type characters, too. like Dirty Steve, and gee, who's the one who came in and promoted the big badger fight? [Laughs] This is getting a long ways from politics, but at certain times of the year, particularly of course, in the summertime when there'd be some big special event, Fourth of July type thing or Labor

Day and so on, why everybody would talk about having a badger fight, but nobody ever really volunteered until one time there was a character in Ely by the name of "Dragline" Miller. And Dragline Miller agreed that he would stage a badger fight at the corner of—in the main corner on Aultman Street, the main corner of Ely. So, of course, this is one time, speaking of local news, I recall we really gave this badger fight a big send-off, and wrote stories about the ferocity of this badger that Dragline Miller had snared out in the desert somewhere. And then there was a great big dog assigned to fight the badger. And through all this publicity and so on, why of course (besides I guess there was a celebration anyway), but there was a tremendous crowd gathered to watch this badger fight. And everyone was sectioned off, and Dragline Miller was dressed in a sort of a catcher's outfit. Dragline was outfitted with this—he had shin guards, and a great mask [gestures through description of costume] and great, heavy gloves, of course; and in the center of the intersection, of course, why we had the usual house where the badger is kept, before he crawled out to fight this vicious dog. And the whole thing went over very, very well. Dragline Miller had a natural flair for producing a badger fight, and everyone went away highly satisfied with the outcome and so on. The badger, of course— well, I'd say the fight was a draw.

[Who was the sucker on this one?] That's something that I can't remember. I just don't remember who it was. There might have been two or three come into town and so on. And you couldn't tell, because there was such a mob there. There hadn't been a badger fight in Ely for years and years. In fact, there may have been elsewhere in Nevada, but I think that those who observed it, some had never seen a badger fight and didn't know what it

was all about—quite a bunch in the crowd—as well, of course, a good many who had heard about badger fights, and snipe hunts, and “Casey runs,” and so on. But it was a very successful outdoor, social activity that particular day, that particular celebration, whatever it might’ve been.

One person of note, of considerable note, I think, that I don’t believe we mentioned before when we were outlining what a good many women did in Ely, was Ruth Marcotte. Ruth Marcotte operated, at the time I was there, owned and operated a sort of a, well, an apartment house, just right downtown Ely, right around the corner from the post office. And, although, I can’t recall, she was particularly active in Ely. She, of course, was very well known in view of the fact that the town of Ruth was named after Ruth Marcotte, as a little girl, when the Bartleys (was it?) discovered the mountain that later became a hole in the ground, the great copper pit. But Ruth (Mrs. Marcotte) was pretty active, I think, but particularly, of course, everyone had sort of a deference for her because of how long she’d been there, and the fact that the great copper pit in fact, had been named after her.

Speaking of other active women, one very much so is Naomi Bernard, the wife of Art Bernard who later was inspector of mines, or deputy inspector of mines, I guess. He then, of course, became warden of the penitentiary. Naomi was very instrumental in starting the Community Concerts in Ely (among other women whose names I can’t remember). But being very musical and an excellent pianist and so on, she helped to bring Community Concerts to Ely, which considerably improved the life style of the folks in Ely. And I remember one memorable group was the Trapp Family Singers, upon which is based the movie the “Sound of

Music.” And of course, there are many, many others at the time. Naomi and other folks working with her, really did a tremendous job as far as updating—well, increasing the social and musical life of the community, I guess.

Might note that, just sort of for the record I guess, that Consolidated Coppermines at Kimberly had been a very integral part of the Ely area and White Pine County. And one of the prominent men of Nevada, who was general superintendent of Consolidated Coppermines, was Paul Sirkegian. It was a sad day for Ely when Paul Sirkegian developed a heart condition and died at a comparatively early age. He was, oh, he was head of the Boy Scout movement in Nevada for a long time, and many, many other civic activities, statewide and in Ely. As general superintendent, he was not the top man. That was, at the time I was there, a man by the name of Cash Cook. But Cash, Mr. Cook was not inclined as Paul Sirkegian was, to civic activities. And Paul Sirkegian was really the big name [laughs], even though he was the second man at Consolidated Coppermines.

EDUCATION

[You wonder if I’d like to discuss the educational flavor of White Pine.] Only that my recollection now is, as you say, that I think the ,educational climate in White Pine County was very good, and because, of course, of people like Chester Davis who was about five-feet-two [laughs], I think, and was a dynamo in that business—in the educational field as well as community-wise.

Glenn Duncan, I can’t remember so much about Glenn, then. He was elected state superintendent of public instruction, and I think he blossomed from that, over in Carson City actually, more than he did in Ely, at least at that time. That’s my recollection. And then

of course, there was Hugh White, also, who was principal of White Pine High, I guess. And he was a very and *is* a very, quiet man, but seemed to handle the situation at White Pine High very well. Actually, all the clamor today about rights of students and so on, you wonder if they didn't handle it considerably [laughs] better. And perhaps the reason is that they could because there wasn't all this—all the legislation which educators today have to abide by in order to keep the schools going; and which in effect, sometimes you wonder if they're not (with all this legislation, particularly national) eventually going to be to the detriment of the educational process. It wasn't exactly an iron fist or anything, but people like Chester Davis were very positive people. And of course, I was not in the inner circle or anything, as far as the educational process is concerned in Ely. I just, everyone had the feeling that it was in real safe hands during the years that I was there. Well, the proof, I guess is, as you've just mentioned, that look what happened to them. They came out of Ely and became statewide figures in the education field, not so much Hugh, I guess, but certainly Chester Davis and Glenn did.

OTHER WRITERS; OTHER PAPERS (PART II)

Otherwise, of course, we were a member of the Nevada State Press Association, the *Ely Daily Times* was. While I was in Ely, I was fairly active, I guess you could say, in the State Press Association, although hardly anyone really is active in the State Press Association. It's sort of one of those things where everyone gathers once a year, and has a cocktail party and a program (it lasts but one day), and the programs sometimes are very, very interesting, as the very last one is, because Gwen and I still attend State Press Association meetings. But it was a pretty loosely knit group, and in fact,

at one point Paul Gardner, the owner and editor, then, of the *Lovelock Review-Miner*, started a sort of rump opposition. Well, couldn't say it was opposition; he claimed Paul said that it definitely was not, but it was called the Small Newspapers Publishers Association of Nevada, or some such name. And I think, actually, that Paul felt that the trouble was that the big newspapers were swinging all the weight, and that they had different problems entirely, than the small newspapers. For instance, publication of legal notices to protect that source of income for the small papers. Paul was a very, very, or *is* a very talkative man; sometimes, in fact, quite frequently, pretty sensible, and sometimes you wonder about what Paul is trying to get at. But this organization died away eventually. And of course, in essence, the small papers had a point—the big newspapers, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, and the *Las Vegas Sun*, and the *Gazette* and *Journal* in Reno had different problems, and mostly they were concerned with freedom of the press, and all the sort of high flown things that must, of course, be defended by the papers, but they were not interested in a good many of the same problems that confronted the small papers. But, as I say, anyway, I can't remember the date or how long that lasted, but eventually, why, everybody got back together. And, in fact, the small papers continued to attend the Press Association meetings.

The fact of the matter always seemed to me to be, there was barely room for the Nevada State Press Association, with the support it got. And, of course, during the many years that A. L. Higginbotham, head of the courses in journalism at the University, was the secretary of the State Press Association, it operated mainly through Professor Higginbotham's tenacity to keep a State Press Association going. And had it not been for him, I don't

believe it would have ever—it would’ve lost all the cohesion that it had, and would have just dissolved, I think. However, by the time that Professor Higginbotham retired (and of course, as you know, died not too long after that), there seemed to be enough going (although the Press Association had been in existence, of course, for gosh, I don’t know, thirty, forty years before that, somewhere in there), but by that time, it seemed to have gained a new momentum, so to speak, and so it’s still an active organization. I believe I was, I did serve as president of the Nevada State Press Association, and I can’t remember what year. I think it was while I was in Ely, 1948, nine? Might’ve been [laughs]. I guess perhaps that’s indicative of the importance attached to it by the various people who were president; I don’t know.

But to the newspaper, however, before I left, the four years or so I was in Ely, other than Mr. Zenoff and Mr. Gardner, one very, clearly a character (it seems as though the publishers of small newspapers are usually characters) was Charlie Triplett of *Wells Progress*. Triplett has long since died, but his son, Bud Triplett, carried on with the paper until his death. Mr. Triplett, the elder Triplett, during the time that he published the *Wells Progress* seemed to make a very good living out of it. He was a wry sort of a man with a flair for getting into battles, not only in his own community, but in Elko County generally, and sometimes even being quoted in his stinging approach to most questions, throughout the state. He carried on a sort of running battle with the editor of the *Elko Independent*, Warren Monroe, who, of course, served as a state senator. But, Warren Monroe, commonly known as “Snowy,” of course, referred to Mr. Triplett as the “old editor up the crick,” or some such phrase. Then Mr. Triplett would swing his axe at Snowy Monroe, and they carried on a sort of

a desultory battle over several years. As far as I know, they were friendly; never had really any trouble, any more than just arguments in their respective papers. Mr. Triplett had just a little bit different philosophy about the future of Elko County, I guess, than Senator Monroe. But, eventually, all that passed, of course, with the passing of Charlie Triplett, who, I think is really one of the figures to be reckoned with when you speak of Nevada newspapering.

Of course, outside of the Press Association, I really was not on close terms with anyone in eastern Nevada. In fact, there were very few papers in eastern Nevada, so at that time, when I was with the *Ely Daily Times*, I guess the only others—well, there was the *Pioche Record*. Oh dear. There was a character. Gosh! Nores. That was E. L. Nores, I think, yes, commonly called “Judge.” I guess he’d been a—or perhaps at that time when he was on the paper, he might’ve also been judge. I can’t remember. But, of course, he was able to survive down at Pioche on a kind of a shoe string situation. He was a [laughs] tremendous storyteller [laughs], and knew a great deal about that part of Nevada. An adjective to fit Judge Nores would be hard to conjure up. He was interesting, and his newspaper was *not*, particularly. He didn’t seem to—my recollection now is, he didn’t get the flavor of Judge Nores in there. If he had, he’d had a lot more readers [laughs]. Of course, he mighta had to lie a little to do that, so I don’t know. But he—I’m sorry I can’t think of a good word for him. He used to tell them on himself, you know, the terrible things that had happened to him and his—. [Little things like dynamiting the sewers, and one thing and another.] I can remember that, and then he told me—. It’s too long ago now, and I saw too little of him really to remember him, to remember how to describe him. Physically, he was a hefty man, and he spoke with—my

recollection is—used very good English, and therefore, I'm sure had had a considerable amount of education, but where I don't know. I guess I'll have to drop him. But the *Pioche Record* just came to mind.

Of course, there was at one time, too, I guess while I was with—either it was the *Caliente Herald*, but I can't remember, I really can't remember. It sort of seemed to change hands from time to time, and you could hardly keep up with the various editors and owners of the *Caliente Herald*.

And of course, the only other paper in eastern Nevada would be the *Humboldt Star*, at that time. I believe Rollin Stitser, who had operated the *Humboldt Star* for many years might have died by that time? [He died about 1939.] So, the paper, of course, at that time was operated by Mrs. Stitser, Avery, and she did an excellent job of it; in fact, I think perhaps at least for the first years that she operated the paper, the *Humboldt Star*, she had more local news in it than Rollin had had. Rollin was a great man on rounding up business, and so on and so forth. And he, at one time developed a tremendous advertising business in the publication of annual statements that are required in the state of Nevada from foreign companies, till he had pages of them; and then he would try to get more. In this particular business venture, he actually ran into competition with the Reno newspapers, the *Journal* and *Gazette*, who were trying to get these too, because it was an excellent business. You just, you set the annual statement once, and then it ran from time to time for a considerable period under the law. A very significant piece of business even for the *Journal* and *Gazette*. But Rollin Stitser had gotten in there first, and I don't know, I suppose this is gone now, but it went on for years where he got this business which, of course, was worth a

great deal more, of importance to him than the Reno papers, which nevertheless made a concerted effort to get annual statements. Rollin didn't really seem to—I think the news that was in the *Humboldt Star*—it had quite a reputation as one of the newspapers of the state. And yet actually, it wasn't until Mrs. Stitser really got her hand on it that it began to improve as far as the local newspaper was concerned. Of course, Avery was a very good businesswoman also, and so she kept the *Star* in operation for a good many years.

Eventually, however, sold to Donrey, I guess, Donrey also. And each time Donrey would pick up a paper, there were rumblings around the state that, you know, eventually Donrey would operate all the newspapers in the state of Nevada, which did not come to pass. In fact, I guess he has less now than he had then. At one time, of course he had the *Review-Journal* and *Ely Daily Times*, and the *Humboldt Star*, and *Carson Appeal*.

Avery was also extremely active in the State Press Association, remained so, and became president; I think the first woman president in the Nevada State Press Association. Later, of course, followed by Ruthe Deskin, who became president some years later—in fact, just a few years ago now I guess.

Of course, I had brushes at the time with other editors, including Hank Greenspun. Whatever opinion people may have of him there's no question that Greenspun's not only an astute businessman, but a fearless person when it came to espousing any particular cause. It didn't make any difference how difficult it was or how he brushed libel. In effect, he was sued for libel so many times, that there were about three or four cases pending, and someone else threatened to sue him, and the word was that Hank said, "Well, you'll have to get in line." You know. [Chuckles] And of course, he, I guess, was beaten a few

times, but the *Sun* went right on challenging the *Review-Journal*, of course.

Then with the advent of Bryn Armstrong, whom Hank Greenspun lured away from the *Reno Evening Gazette* and remains now as executive editor of the *Sun*; the *Sun* really took off as a competitor of the *Review-Journal*. And Armstrong, having been in Nevada for so long, and having lived in the northern part of the state, and then going down to the southern part with his great acumen as an editor, really helped Hank Greenspun, no end. Not a great deal of use in my speaking of Greenspun, whom I knew personally, only really, relatively little. And besides, there're books— he's written his own books [chuckles]; many comments, most of them, I guess, adverse about Mr. Greenspun. I do recall, at one time, that we saw eye to eye, but that was later when I was editor of the *Nevada State Journal*. That would encompass eastern, and incidentally, southern Nevada editors, I guess, at that time.

I was trying to recall who was editor of the *Review-Journal* then. I guess perhaps Al Cahlan was. Of course, the Cahlans were northern Nevadans too, who had migrated south and done quite well. Al, of course, had the column. He's another that I didn't know too well. He had a column called "Where I Sit." And his brother John was for a long, long time, sports editor for the *Review-Journal*. John was given not to, I mean in his columns and so on, not given greatly to the facts, or at least so he was charged by [laughs] a great many people. I recall at one time that Julian Epperson, who was the political reporter for the *Reno Evening-Gazette*, picked up the *Review-Journal* one day and saw this column, sports column, and he thought to himself, "I've seen that, somewhere else, word for word." So he looked back and sure enough, he found it in, say, a California newspaper or

something, this column. John had neglected to say that he was picking this column up from someone else. So Julian Epperson sent him a telegram and said, "Why don't you sue that s.o.b. for stealing your story?" This would not bother John particularly. [Laughs] But the Cahlans were very, very well-known newspapermen in this state, but not too well known in the main—most of it hearsay really, as that anecdote probably is.

AN ENGAGEMENT AT THE STOCKMEN'S HOTEL, ELKO, NEVADA

In 1950, harking back now to the time of the *Ely Daily Times*, in that year of '50, the general election saw the defeat of Vail Pittman, who owned the *Ely Times*, of which I was then editor and general manager. Upon Vail's defeat by Charles H. Russell—both Elyites, by the way—Vail, naturally, had no place to go but back to his newspaper. Shortly after election day, why he called me into Reno, or we were in Reno, and met with him at the Riverside with Mrs. Pittman, and they informed me, of course, that they were going to come back and take over the paper. So I would have to find gainful employment elsewhere. So I guess about January first of 1951, why, they returned and resumed their publication of *Ely Daily Times* after his absence as acting governor and four years—well, about a year, I think, as acting governor, and then he was elected for four years. They came back and took over the paper, of course, later selling it to Donrey Media, and moving to Las Vegas. They both moved to Las Vegas, where Vail died within, not too long a time. Mrs. Pittman, of course, still resides in Las Vegas.

Anyway, of course, when the Pittmans announced that they were coming back to take over the paper, which, naturally, I expected after Vail's defeat for governor, Gwen and I were a little concerned as to what was going to happen and where we were going to go and what we were going to do. We started out at first and made a few passes at buying a small weekly somewhere. One of these, as I recall, was in Cody, Wyoming, and another up in Washington somewhere, in a small town in eastern Washington. And at one time we drove down to Boulder City, because Morry Zenoff had indicated at that time that he wanted to sell the *Boulder City News*. Meeting Morry was an experience in itself. He has the sound of a happy, sort of happy-go-lucky, wisecracking type of man, who actually isn't very much that way at all. He's a very, very good businessman. You could see that from looking at the plant that he ran in Boulder City. But, of course, Morry wanted a great deal more than we were able to pay, and so that ended that. So we never became southern Nevadans.

Whilst this was going on, of course, I, having previously been in Elko, and working on the *Daily Free Press* for six years, I had a few friends there, and among them, specifically, were two of the town's leading citizens: Orville Wilson, an attorney, and Pete Walters, a real estate man—and I think Pete has come into this before. Pete was still there and now in the real estate business, having left the Commercial Hotel. They, in turn, had a good friend, Red Ellis (R. C. Ellis, always known as Red), who happened at that time to be looking for an assistant manager. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Walters knowing that I was out in the cold, so to speak, in the newspaper business, suggested to Mr. Ellis that I might be the man he was looking for as assistant manager of the Stockmen's Hotel, which he had operated by that time for, oh, perhaps four or five years.

So, either Mr. Wilson or Mr. Walters advised me of this, and I wrote a letter to Mr. Ellis, and Mr. Ellis asked me to drive over to Elko from Ely for an interview. We had an interview, I suppose, although I don't remember it; attended a floor show, and chatted with Mr. Ellis for a moment. And he said, "Well," (in effect) "when can you come to work?" So with that, I realized that Gwen and I had avoided destitution, and I had another job.

Well, in any event, then I left at the end of 1950, left Ely, and moved to Elko and into the hotel business, about which, incidentally, I knew absolutely nothing. I hadn't even been in very many hotels up to that time in my life, let alone know them. I found, of course, that, actually, what Mr. Ellis wanted was not a hotel man, but basically a greeter—someone who knew Nevada and knew many Nevadans, and he was not too concerned about my lack of knowledge in the hotel business.

We had a daughter, by this time, Jackie, who was, oh I guess about a year old. I think

she was born in February of '49. (Yes, two I guess she'd be—whatever.)

We moved to Elko, and I began working in the Stockmen's Hotel, which was a tremendous experience in itself. And if I thought I had worked long, hard hours in the newspaper business, I hadn't seen anything yet. working in the Stockmen's Hotel—this would be the old Stockmen's, of course, rebuilt after a fire a few years later; there's a new one. The old Stockmen's was quite a gathering place for a great many people, and you were expected to be around to talk to them, to offer them any service that you could, and so I usually went to work about ten o'clock in the morning, and worked always until at least two, or maybe three in the morning, seven days a week. Actually [laughs], you didn't have to do this, you just understood that that's the way you could perform best, and you'd better be there.

And then, of course, in the gambling business, after I began to learn a little bit about it from Mr. Ellis, I found out that one of the things, of course, that you had to be ever on the alert for, were the crossroaders. And we had about a hundred slot machines as I recall, which was a tremendous amount for those days, in that small a town. And invariably, with slot machines running all the way around the casino and bar—or not all the way, but mostly—, it was not a difficult thing, in a crowd, for a crossroader to spoon the slot machines, and so we would have to watch them; and of course, the dice were also—every once in a while someone was throwing bad dice into the table, into the play [laughs] , and before you knew it, you were out four or five hundred dollars before the dealers could reach down and grab the dice. All this sort of thing sort of made it incumbent upon you to be there as much as possible.

Mr. Ellis was there almost the same. He usually came down a little before I did, and

probably left a little before I did. But we were both there seven days a week unless we had some specific thing to do, such as go to a party or something of that nature, why, one would tell the other, "Well, I won't be here," and it didn't make any difference. There was never—I don't think in the, two years actually, I guess, I worked for Mr. Ellis, I don't think we ever had any cross words. All he would do is give me advice, and it was always good, because, of course [laughs], he was a natural in the gambling business. And of course, he had been in it, in a sense, when he came to Elko.

He acquired the Stockmen's Hotel along with a partner, a millionaire in Salinas, California. Red Ellis and Clair Bigham were Salinas residents. They had a friend who went through Elko one day and looked at the old Mayer Hotel, and thought to himself, "This would be a great spot for a joint." So he lived then—at that time this friend lived, I believe, in San Francisco. (And I'm sorry—his name escapes me now. He later ran the Mizpah Hotel in Tonopah.) But he went back to California and got in touch with either Mr. Bigham or Mr. Ellis, and explained to them about this Mayer Hotel, which was just a hotel then, and crumbling at that. So Red Ellis, in about 1944, I'd say, I think it was during the war; Red Ellis had been a lettuce picker, and came into Salinas and eventually got a job in one of the bars owned by Mr. Bigham; Mr. Bigham having started, came to Salinas with about a half a trunkful of clothes and nothing else, and eventually acquired the largest hotel in Salinas, and river bottom lands, and became a millionaire; and one time owned a whole string (and perhaps still does, for all I know) of liquor stores called the "Cork'n Bottle."

But he hired Red Ellis fresh in off the lettuce fields, as it were, as bartender. And he noticed, as time went on, that the bar that Mr.

Ellis ran, located in the middle of a block in Salinas, was getting all the business from the two competitors—one at each corner. And Mr. Bigham thought, "I'd better look into this fellow." So he found out that Red Ellis was just a natural to attract people. (Red told me later, one of the things he used to do was go right out on the sidewalk and stand and talk to people, as they came by passing his bar, and pretty soon they were coming into his bar.) So eventually, Red became a partner of Mr. Bigham's in the bar business, in Salinas. And of course, the bar business in Salinas included a few little games, and one thing 'n another in the back room, and that sort of business. So Mr. Ellis had something of a knowledge of the gaming business at the time that he went to Elko to look over the Stockmen's. He went back and reported to Mr. Bigham, and they bought the Mayer Hotel, and remained as partners for many, many years.

Mr. Ellis, of course, since they bought this hotel, and they were going to refurbish it, make a gaming casino, provided for the gaming casino, and so on and so forth, went to Elko from Salinas and took over the hotel, and that's how Red Ellis arrived in Elko. At the present time, of course, he owns a big shopping center at the east end of Elko, that is, he owns all the property, which he acquired, I believe, from W. H. Moffat, Bill Moffat. He owns, or did own—I guess he sold a big motel downtown; and of course, still operates the Commercial Hotel, which he later acquired after selling the Stockmen's Hotel.

One of the highlights of my existence as a "hotelman," was the tremendous battle that ensued as Red Ellis began to develop and become a competitor of the Commercial Hotel, then owned by the Crumleys—Newton, Sr. and Newton, Jr. Newton, Sr. died, oh, quite a number of years ago, so Newton, Jr. operated the Commercial. And, of course,

this fight extended outward in all kinds of directions[chuckles], I think. The Stockmen's Hotel, of course, is directly across the tracks from the Commercial Hotel. And it was said at one time, that Newton, Jr. told his employees, "Every time you have a chance to look up and see the Stockmen's Hotel across the tracks, I want you to spit!" [Laughs] And that was the kind of competition that there was between the two hotels. That also, was one reason why I got the job as assistant manager—to assist Mr. Ellis in garnering customers, taking them away from the Commercial, or holding them once you got them.

And people of Elko, of course, benefited greatly by this competition over a period of quite a few years, because, oh, if a banquet was being planned by any organization, for instance, you're gonna have say fifty people or a hundred, or whatever. The banquet chairman would automatically go to one or the other of the hotels, and say, "Well, we're gonna have a banquet. We're gonna have a hundred people there. We wondered what you could do for us for the menu, and so on. How much?" And so when they got that story, then they'd march across the tracks, whichever direction, whichever one they had gone to first, and they'd say, "Well, what can you do?" And then the food man would give them his best shot over there; and then they would say, "Well," (let us say they went to Crumleys first) they'd say, "Well, now Mr. Frankovich" (that was Lee Frankovich, of course, who was Newt Crumley's general manager) "Mr. Frankovich says he will give us thus and so for this much money." So then over at the Stockmen's, why, we'd try and do better—less money, more food [laughs]—till it almost got ridiculous. Sometimes it used to seem—it really seemed as though both of those hotels were giving everything away, and that, of course, was one of the secrets of the success. Certainly, I don't

know about the commercial, but I know that the Stockmen's Hotel would just go so far out of its way for legitimate customers, that it just seemed as though they could hardly operate. Of course, that was [laughs] hardly the case since they were doing a land office business really, especially in the summertime.

BEARS

But at Christmastime, I remember we bought some of these great massive teddy bears [gesture-3 feet tall]. You wonder why you'd get teddy bears for a gambling place, but oh gosh, I've forgotten how many dozens of them we bought. They were beautiful teddy bears. And every time that a customer came in with a youngster into the lobby, into the cafe, we would spot them, and we'd go get one of these enormous teddy bears, and hand it to the little girl or little boy, or whoever; and of course, the mother's eyes would just light up, and it didn't make any difference if she was a rich rancher's wife [laughs] or if she were struggling, as long as we knew that she was a customer, and *paid*. And of course, even those who were not, but who came in fresh, but who appeared good customers would get—the youngster would get a teddy bear; or we would give it to the mother, and sometimes even the father, if we knew they had smaller children, and say, "Take them home." I don't know how many hundreds of dollars we spent just giving away these teddy bears, which I cite only as one example of the giveaway.

[The bear was kind of a symbol there anyway, wasn't it?]

Yes, it was, that's true, and that's something else, another story in itself about the great Kodiak bear. I forget at what point when I was at the Stockmen's, but a man by the name of Sorenson, I think, or something like that— Doc, he was known as. He had a big

trailer from which he sold suits of clothes. And he stopped at the Stockmen's, and he was engaged in conversation with Red Ellis one day; and he said, "You know, I've got this great big Kodiak bear that I shot on Kodiak Island in Alaska, and it's probably, it may well be the largest Kodiak bear that has ever been killed. I have it at ZCMI in Salt Lake," and as a matter of fact, it was such a famous bear at ZCMI that two men with a business appointment would say, "Well, I'll see you under the bear, at twelve fifteen." That was how—and everybody in Salt Lake knew when they said, "I'll see you under the bear."

Well, you went to ZCMI apparently I've forgotten what—there was some sort of conflict, and so this man who had shot the bear mentioned it. He said, "I'll just sell that bear if it's going to be more trouble to me than it's worth," or something, and he was always out on the road, and he was, as I say, in difficulties with ZCMI, somehow or other, over the bear.

So Red said, "How much do you want for it?" And I don't know what Red paid for the bear, perhaps a couple of thousand dollars, something like that. And so they made a deal.

And the night the bear arrived—the bear incidentally was in a great case, a great glass case, and standing, of course, on its feet, that is on its rear feet with its front paws extended out like this [gesture]. So when the bear arrived in the case, we had to take the front doors off of the hotel, and then it just barely slid through, and we placed it in the center of the lobby which was rather small anyway. (But, of course, you don't want much of a lobby in a gambling house; people sit down instead of get up and play.) So [chuckles] the bear was installed, and of course, the bear was a great, great attraction for years.

And when the Stockmen's Hotel burned—I was not there, of course, but I was on the other

end of a telephone with Mel Steninger, who was the grandson of E. M. Steninger, and who was then sort of working as a reporter, and I was then editor of the *Journal*—called me and said, "Paul, I'm over in the Commercial, and I'm looking across the tracks and the Stockmen's Hotel is burning down." He said, "I just wanted to make sure you were where you are." [Laughs] That was a dirty remark, isn't it? And so, of course, actually what he wanted to do was give me the story. And he said that when the Stockmen's burned, it just burned in its entirety. But this great bear in the lobby stayed right in place until the very, very end, and then crashed, down into the basement; and that was the end of the great Kodiak bear—which incidentally, stimulated others, and stimulated Mr. Ellis when he eventually acquired the Commercial Hotel, to get a big polar bear and put it in the lobby. And also, the Holiday Hotel in Reno had a bear; in fact for a long time they had "credit manager around its neck, I recall [laughs]. And anyway, it was all started by Red Ellis who bought the great Kodiak from Doc Sorenson.

* * * * *

The people benefited, too, of course, from the tremendous competition between the two hotels, because it revived the great floor show era which had been started years before by Newt Crumley, Jr. But Red Ellis then began getting floor shows, and one hotel would try to top the other until I recall that Newton Crumley, Jr. engaged for the Christmas season, Xavier Cugat, his entire orchestra, and Abbe Lane, who was a singer, quite noted at the time. We had to scratch around over in the hotel, and when we heard that Xavier Cugat was coming, we could see all the business going over to the Commercial. So a booking manager in Seattle, Washington,

with whom we had done business and had furnished us with very good acts—but not necessarily name acts—sent us a telegram—sent Mr. Ellis one, I guess—said that he had this fellow that sang these cowboy songs and one thing and another, and strummed a guitar without any strings in it, and so on, but he was doing just great up there, and everybody just loved him. And Red thought, said, “Well, gee, I don’t know. I don’t think that—.” He told the booking manager, “I can’t see that that character would hold up against Xavier Cugat.” And the fellow said, “Well, I don’t know.” Naturally, he was trying to sell this fellow, but Red could tell that certainly he would make a stab at it.

Red said, “What’s this guy’s name?”

And he said, “Well his name is Ernie Ford. He goes by the name of Tennessee Ernie.”

And Red said, “How much does he want?”

And I suppose it was a couple of thousand a week, you know—Tennessee Ernie was then not what he became not too many years after. But at any rate, we engaged Tennessee Ernie as the headliner in our floor show, and sure enough, he held even with Xavier Cugat, because the people in Elko, of course, like that—although Cugat did a tremendous business too, but people liked Ernie Ford.

There were various others that we had—names of that day. Oh, Margaret Whiting. At one point, we almost, but did not quite, engage a group called the Will Mastin Trio, which had a youngster with it that was the son of one of those in the group, I guess, and he later achieved some fame under the name of Sammy Davis, Jr. But we did not get them. We were right on the verge, and something happened, and they went somewhere else or something, and so that one blew.

But at any rate, this stimulated the economy of Elko. It brought people in from all over, from Utah, and Idaho, and of course,

from all around Elko and that part of Nevada. And actually this *bitter* competition was in some ways a blessing, and in some ways, maybe not, I don’t know.

Eventually, of course, Newton Crumley, Jr. sold his hotel to a man by the name of Harrington Drake, and then moved to Reno where he bought the Holiday Hotel in downtown Reno. Harrington Drake was, I think, a man from Los Angeles. He didn’t understand Elko and Elko’s situation too well; and then next thing you know, Red Ellis had acquired the Commercial and Ranchinn hotels which were both under the Crumley name until the sale. And then later on Mr. Ellis sold the Ranchinn, which by now has become a pretty old—it was the great place to stay in Elko for awhile, but of course, it got older, and eventually went from hand to hand, as it were, and sold two or three times.

Of course, after I’d been with the Stockmen’s Hotel about two years, I guess, Mr. Ellis decided he would sell. And he sold to a group from Idaho, headed by Dan Bilbao (that is, I don’t know about the money, but Dan was head of the group of folks), and another man by the name of Stratton (his first name I can’t remember), Virgil McGee, who had been manager of the Boise Hotel, and Joe Dollard who owned a bank or savings and loan association, I think, in Boise.

The hotel business was a fascinating one for me, and turned out to be very helpful in future years when I went back into the newspaper business.

[I’d like to go on a little bit more about the gambling and crossroaders, and so forth, and about our relationships with the tax commission agents and so forth, you know, in the gambling business.] I didn’t have any, because Mr. Ellis took care of that, if there was any. While I was there the only thing that I really remember where we had to call

them in, was we had a past-poster. We had a horse book, at that time in the Stockmen's. And somebody past-posted us, and I think we had the man arrested, or the gaming commission—well, the Tax Commission at that time. The Tax Commission, I think, stepped in, and this did get some publicity at the time on this. And I've forgotten the upshot of it, whether or not the man was convicted, or whether we lost that case or not: That's the only one that specifically comes to mind as far as the Stockmen's is concerned.

We had to do our own protecting. We were forced to watch ourselves, as I remember, and I don't remember any occasion, with the possible exception of this one with the past-posting of the horses. Otherwise, I don't recall ever seeing a Tax Commission man in there. Now perhaps there were, and perhaps I even met them, but I can't recall them now. But as I explained before, the reason that we spent such hours there, one of the reasons, was to watch. And I recall at one period, I was at the Orville Wilson home, which was high on a bluff, and you could look out and see the Stockmen's, and I was attending a party. And we'd had a little trouble with somebody, and I began to worry about not being at work—although, of course [laughs], you were always at work; and not being at work was nothing, and Mr. Ellis never, ever questioned if I said, "I've got to be out tonight." He'd say, "Fine, Paul. Take tonight. Take tomorrow," he would say, and so on, which you never could do because you just had to be there.

And I recall looking out and seeing the great Stockmen's sign with the big steer that was quite famous up and down the highway in those days, and it was all lighted up, and the "Stockmen's" of course, was blinking away; and I recall getting so nervous—I don't know whether we were playing bridge or just in conversation or what, but I recall getting

very, very nervous, but I stuck out the party, because it was a beautiful party [laughs]. But I worried all during the party, that I wouldn't be there, and maybe Red would have to be gone (and of course he was much more expert at these things than I anyway). But if he were gone, too, for some reason or other, somebody'd come in and steal us blind. So I guess it was, as you say, at that time, the burden of watching out for the cheaters was on the management, and, of course, the dealers and so on. We usually had very good dealers, good pit bosses, people that were very responsible and who knew most of all the tricks. But even so, you'd get fooled once in a while.

Once we had a woman; we hired a woman "21" dealer, which was very, very rare then, from Reno. And sometime later, a man came in, and packed out several hundred dollars in almost no time at all from her table; and of course, they were in liaison. And that sort of thing you had to watch, too. I don't think we hired a woman for quite a while after that [laughs].

Of course, beside the cheating through actually cheating the games, one of the great headaches, which is nonexistent in casinos these days, or virtually nonexistent, was the writing of checks. People came in constantly about cashing a check; and when you had the power of the pen, as it were, and all you had—. Anyone who presented a check to me, if I decided that they were good for it—and this was mostly your own decision from observing, and watching, and talking to them for a few minutes, and mostly by looking in their wallets—that is, speaking of men particularly. If a man belonged to a country club; if he had a country club card; if he—I'm speaking, of course, of visitors coming and going. We knew all the bad check artists around Elko, that was no problem. But

men, people coming through might want to cash a check as high as five hundred dollars, say, something like that, even a hundred. I would insist that they get their wallet out. Some protested, and I said, "Well, I'm sorry I can't cash your check until I look and see your identification." And as I say, if they belonged to a country club, if they were a member of the Shriners, if they were—. But such things as an automobile license (which they ask you for now when you cash a check in Reno, they want, everyone wants—we never paid much attention to that; anyone can get an automobile license; but not anybody can afford to join the Shrine, or to belong to a country club.) And another thing we used to use, as I recall, was the airplane credit card. You had any number, that would go through your mind as you would just go through the wallet and look at them all, and make your decision.

Even then, once in a while, of course, you'd get caught. And of course, then sometimes a person would come in with money, say, a hundred or two hundred dollars, and they'd want to cash a check. It was rather a slight—you see, you'd already beat them out of that money.

So, I would on occasion just put an okay, especially if they didn't want too much money, like only fifty or a hundred dollars, something like that. Then the first thing you'd know, they'd lose that, and they'd be back. And then you'd think, "Well, I guess we can risk another hundred." And then the bank statement [laughs] would come in, and Mr. Ellis would call me in and say, "Well Paul, what happened to this guy?" And bang, bang, bang, here's three or four checks for a hundred dollars apiece—all insufficient funds, all bounced. Of course, you got better at it as time went along, but it was quite a responsibility, and it was a terrible, terrible headache in some

ways. You can say, of course, well, we beat 'em out of it, so it didn't cost us anything, but [laughs] that's really not right, that's not good business, so you'd try to hold your bounced checks down to a minimum. Nowadays, of course, the casinos are very, very difficult on these things, as you're probably well aware. I notice they don't—you just cannot cash a check unless you have established your credit, and you have to do that first, I guess. I have, for instance, a Harrah's credit card, and it's very easy if you have it; if you don't have it, I'm just sure you would never get a dime. And of course, I suppose that's the way it oughta be.

And too, on the other hand, as far as letting a player go, once in a while—. I recall at one point, we had a man come in, and we'd never seen him before, and he began gambling, and he was betting the limit, I guess—right straight. I forget whether he was shooting craps or playing "21." But he'd dropped, oh, I guess several hundred dollars, and then he wanted to get a thousand. Of course, we're speaking pretty small potatoes when you're talking about Harrah's or big places in Vegas and so on, or Reno, but at that time, that was quite a bit of money. And he wanted another thousand. So Red and I were both there at the time when he was playing—very nice man with obvious good education and so on. But naturally, you begin to worry about it when he wants another thousand dollars. I think perhaps we'd gone for one check. It's difficult to remember now. But anyway, we asked him then what he should—what we—who he was, as it were. And so he said, "My name is so-and-so, and so-and-so," and he said, "Here, call this number." (This incidentally, was in the afternoon.) So we got ahold of his bank with his okay, and asked about the money, and they said, "Well, Mr. so-and-so is pretty well to do. I don't believe you have any worries there, even if it went up to ten or fifteen thousand."

[Laughs] So you never know, you see, whether you're dealing with somebody that's trying to cheat you out by writing checks, or otherwise.

On the crossroading itself, our biggest trouble, of course, was spooning of the slots. And then, suddenly, one day or over a short period of time, our slot machine man, who was a terrific expert, young fellow, but very, very sharp on slots, and he had worked in Reno before he came to Elko—but we found that the machines were being beaten consistently. Well, of course, as anyone knows, you cannot beat a slot machine consistently unless you cheat it. It will take a certain percentage over a certain period of time, just as sure as the sun rises. And this was not happening. And, of course, you'll recall this. They had learned from the school, either here or in Vegas, I think it was in Vegas, how to "rhythm" them in. And so when we discovered this (and we discovered it practically about as early as anyone did), but these rhythm folks, I guess as they took this course down in Vegas (if that's where it was) why, they sort of spread out all over the state, and they were really taking the slot machines.

Well, Bud Johnson, who was our slot machine man, discovered what they were doing; and then took Red and me, I guess, and demonstrated to us—took some money and took us downstairs and said, "Here's a slot I just took off the floor. Watch." And he would rhythm this machine in, and get it to paying, and then he would empty the machine. So he conceived the idea of putting a sort of a governor, or a balance wheel or something back in the mechanism of the slot machine, which did not harm the slot machine as far as its regular pay was concerned, but which, every few pulls would return it away from the rhythm, that is, however. So we put a stop to that, to the rhythming in of the slot machines.

The slot machines, mostly, incidentally, were from Mills Novelty Company in those days. I hardly ever see them any more here. And of course, in Reno, and I guess in Las Vegas too, [W. S.] Si Redd has a big bulk of the slot machine business, and a very, very lucky thing for Nevada that someone of his caliber does, I might add; Bally Distributing Company, not to be confused with Bally Manufacturing Company which makes the slot machines back in Chicago.

A humorous incident concerning the gambling business. I guess after Bud Johnson left, we hired a young man from Chicago, who had worked in repairing slot machines in Chicago places—illegal places. He had done this for quite a little while. One day, before I went down to work, about nine-thirty, ten o'clock in the morning, he called me, and he was very, very scared. And he said, "Paul."

I said, "Yes."

He said, "There's a man here; he's got a whole bunch of camera equipment, and he wants to take pictures—wants to take pictures," he said, "of our one-armed bandits."

Now what we had done was actually equip several slot machines in the lobby with a cowboy hat and a handle with a pistol in it, because slot machines had come to be known, of course, as one-armed bandits, particularly outside of the state of Nevada.

So I said, "You say he's got a lot of camera equipment?"

He said, "Oh yeah. He's got those big lights and everything, and he wants to take pictures."

I said, "Where'd he come from?"

He said, "Well he said he came over here from Salt Lake City. He's from *Life* magazine." [Laughs]

And I said, "*Life* magazine!?" I almost jumped out of my chair. [gestures-leaps out of chair] I said, "Don't do anything. I'll be right down."

And I got dressed, and I ran down, practically got in the car and just roared down to the Stockmen's Hotel, and went in, and this fellow was standing there, still setting his photographic gear up and one thing or another, with the lights shining down on the—four or five one-armed bandits were all in a row in the lobby. And, of course, what was funny was that this slot machine man—he was so used to things being illegal, that he didn't want anybody taking pictures of slot machines. It was just a subconscious reaction on his part. He hadn't been in Nevada long enough to—. Well, of course, I went in and I met this man, who was thirty-five, forty years old I guess. He introduced himself and handed me his card, which, of course, could easily be—you know, I didn't, I just couldn't believe that *Life* magazine had actually come. So I said, "Well, you go ahead. Take your pictures. That's fine, you know. If I can be of any help, just let me know. If you want someone to play 'em—" and all this.

And he said, "Oh, thank you very much."

We had a drugstore at that time, in connection with the Stockmen's—there was a drugstore. So while he was doing this, I ran into the drugstore, and I said, "Have you got a *Life* magazine here?"

And they said, "Oh, sure. Right over there in the corner."

So there was *Life*, and I picked it up, and I ran to the masthead, and I read down, and I looked at my card, and sure enough, he was a photographer for *Life* magazine. [Laughs] That really made it. Well, of course, he took all these pictures. And eventually, I was on a trip for the hotel—that's another facet of my job—I was on a trip. I was in about Rawlins, Wyoming, or someplace of that nature. And I called back to the hotel to see if everything was going all right; got ahold of Red, and Red

said, "Yeah everything is fine, Paul. Have you seen *Life* magazine?"

And I yelled, "No! It's in there!"

And lo, and behold. I then went to Rawlins, or whatever town it was, bought the latest *Life*, and here was a great double spread in the center of *Life* magazine, or almost, of the Stockmen Hotel's one-armed bandits—which of course, was a great coup! That was one time when we really beat the Commercial.

Another time was completely inadvertent. We picked up—someone called our attention to a piece in the *Holiday* magazine naming the Stockmen's as being the "friendliest casino" he had ever been in, in his life. So we got quite a little boost there, and I guess we used that any

Gambling, of course, the crossroad situation, as you have mentioned I think, eventually gave rise to stringent measures, on the part of the control in the state. That is more began to be understood that a casino could really get taken, and if they were tolerated in Nevada, and then they were legal. And therefore, I guess, they were entitled to protection, as well as the protection of the public, which I think still remains foremost, of course, is to protect the public against cheaters, of which there are very, very few. And all of those little—(not that the casino owners consider themselves as running an eleemosynary institution, but that it's to their advantage never, ever to cheat a customer, and to throw anybody out on the sidewalk on his ear almost, any dealer who's caught doing so)—little places run into difficulties, of course; business gets bad, and they don't know where the next dollar's coming from, how they're gonna pay the rent for their joint, and temptation rises. And of course, if a Gaming Commission agent comes in at that time, that's a real—that's the end.

But, we also had some, oh, card creasing and that sort of thing in "21." But it seemed to me that the slot machines were the worst.

Then of course, the incident about the cheating at the "21" table can also be repeated in racehorse Keno, now just called Keno, always called racehorse Keno. And we were sure once, but never could prove it, that somebody hit an eight on nine for several dollars, and the circumstances surrounding it are vague with me now, but I was just sure. And of course this happened in February or sometime in your very, very slowest month, it always seemed. Either that, or else someone would legitimately—people would legitimately get lucky in the slow months, and carry all our money out the door. And it just seemed that as business got better, the big winners got fewer [laughs]. And so during the summer, the money would roll in so fast it was hard to count it, especially the slot machine money. And of course, we had this great big—perhaps you've seen those great big counters. You just dump the nickels in if it's nickels, then you punch the nickel button, and then you just go like this, and proooooop—out comes two dollars worth of nickels, wrapped. And we started out with a little one that you mostly ran yourself, and we couldn't keep up in the summer. It got so we couldn't package the money fast enough, so we got a more sophisticated machine, I presume something along this line, probably much more advanced now, because after all this was twenty-five years ago, is used now in the big casinos. I don't know what they use. I've never been in a counting room since I left the Stockmen's Hotel.

It was interesting to count the money, too. And, as I say, in the wintertime, you'd go into the pit and pull the boxes from under the tables, and the pit boss would then put in a

new box and cart it into the office, and put all your boxes in one place, and dump them out, and start counting the money. And of course if someone were beating you, you had to put more money in as you gave them more chips, or more whatever, and so you'd make out a fill slip. And you could almost tell what kind of a shift that was for that particular game when you dumped the money out, by the amount of the fill slips. If there were a whole batch of fill slips, look out, because you were really gonna get beaten in that game. And sometimes, of course it'd run hundreds and hundreds of dollars on a shift.

Gambling isn't—. Some people seem to think that all you have to do is own a casino, and you might as well— almost like owning a mint. But it isn't quite like that, believe me [laughs]. And you can just get beaten, and beaten, and beaten. And as I say, it always seemed to happen after New Year's when business slacked off, and there was nobody around, why the few customers that were around were winning.

Well, we had cheating. As far as cheating worries were concerned, we had cheating on the race book, and I'm sure on the Keno, and sometimes on "21" in the cards, as well as the cahoots thing that I was speaking of. But, the dice, of course, was where they really would try it on you. Roulette was very, very difficult; it's pretty hard to cheat roulette. But the dice—in the first place, the dice generate the excitement, of course, and when you get eight, ten people playing against the house, you get excitement, and you get people yelling, and all this sort of thing, you know, for a point, and while this is going on, a real good dice switcher [chuckles] will throw in what, I think a pit boss told me once, were called "tops." And, of course, they're identical, and they have "Stockmen's Hotel" on them. Oh,

the first thing you'd know, why he'd be bettin' the limit, and he'd be making his point, and rolling sevens, or however it was done, and he'd wipe you out of five hundred dollars so fast [laughs] you wouldn't know it was gone hardly. And with good dealers, and the pit boss looking over, as soon as anyone starts really to win, the pit boss keeps a close eye, of course. But usually, they've taken quite a bit of money before finally the pit boss goes bang [gesture]—down on the table, and grabs the dice. When he does that, of course, then he looks to see, and sure enough, they're the weighted dice. But it's very difficult. Perhaps the person who was throwing the dice, might well not have been the one who was cheating, or at least can certainly say that he or she was not the one. Now how you gonna pin it? "Well, I don't know, just what you handed me." So it's a very difficult thing to prove. So all you could do, really, was just stop the game, put in new dice, and then keep an eye on it. Of course, once that happened why, whoever would do it, perhaps would play a little while, and then be gone. But the dice cheating was [laughs], I guess the worst, because it was more vulnerable, in a sense.

Slots were—. They have all kinds of situations, you know. They drill into the side. They hit the spoon down. We found one fellow had this little drill, and he'd just grip his hand at the side of the slot machine, then he'd put a nickel in, finally run this drill in and stop the reels—I guess, is how he did it. Another oddity about slot machines is people (and I'm sure someone's explained all these things, discussed them, but) have an idea that all you need is a screwdriver to change the pay in the slot machine, which, of course, is a complete fallacy. The only way you can change the pay in a slot machine is by adding lemons or taking away oranges or whatever there is on the reels, running a different kind

of a reel. No other way to do it; you just drop the percentage or raise it.

Our slot machines, incidentally, were—. We claimed and never had any dispute that outside of Harolds Club, our slot machines (in northern Nevada, of course—I don't know about Vegas), but in northern Nevada that our slot machines paid a bigger percentage than any other slot machines in northern Nevada. And of course, by the same token, we made more money, because people did not play the slot machines very heavily at the Commercial, or the Ranchinn, because it was their policy—and it was pure policy, nothing wrong with it—not to have loose slot machines. Why, I don't know. But anyway, we did and, of course, we had three quarters of the slot machine play in Elko, I guess, just in that one hotel, out of a hundred—hundred and fifty slot machines, or however many we had. Then, of course, all you need to make money on a slot machine is volume. The more times you can get the handle to come down, the more money you make, in the long run.

[Do I remember what the percentage was?]

No, I've forgotten now. I think

[1.9?]

Oh gosh, it wasn't that good. That's really down. I think it was four, or five, or six, or something like that. Maybe it was six, even, which was considered a very liberal slot, in those days. Well, I'm not sure in the first place, that we were low, but we were certainly low outside of the big towns, and compared to a grocery store [laughs]. After all, you can understand why grocery stores have tight slots, I think. People don't stand around them and play them.

One of the things that was fascinating about the hotel business, about this type, about the gambling hotel business, was the presentation itself of the floor shows. We had

a very small showroom. And it was actually a floor show. We had no stage, except a little, tiny place where maybe a trio could play, would be about all, so that the entertainers actually appeared on the floor, on the dance floor, is what it was. And of course, with these big names, people were just putting the heat on you all over the place. You had to attempt to be a master of conciliation when someone would call up, whom you knew was a good customer, and you'd already filled the place up. Even then you'd say, "Come on down." And we had a side door way in back, and if a real good customer, or real prominent person came in along with wife and another couple probably, I would open this door and say, "Just wait a second," and then I'd goggle something around so they could at least sit down, and watch the show. We had a young man who actually seated the customers, and he would till it up according to rank and serial number [laughs]. Even so, we'd have people squawk because they had to pay fifty cents for a Coca-Cola. And then we would ask them, "We spend so many thousands of dollars each week on this show, and you expect us to sell you a coke for a dime!" They never could understand that. And of course, you lost a lot of money anyway. But you tried to get as much as you possibly could. And this, incidentally, was not a dinner showroom, there was just drinks.

We had entertainment always. One particular group—we still exchange Christmas cards with Don Ragon, who lives in Las Vegas part of the time, and is now a band leader on a big cruise ship. And he and his wife, Alice, are still sort of friends of ours, and we saw them once here in Reno, oh, just a year or so ago. They came up when a group with which they were closely associated was appearing at the Eldorado. But, the floor shows were interesting, but very trying on your nerves.

After the shows were over too, we would entertain the entertainers. When the second show was finished, [we'd] take the entertainers out to the bar and buy them a drink, engage them in conversation, have a lot of hilarity, and so on. And of course, when the entertainers came out, the bar—especially if they were well known, if they'd done a real good job, why everybody'd want to meet them and talk to them. We'd buy drinks right and left, you know. The entertainers sometimes would go home [laughs], or go up to their rooms, in pretty bad shape.

Speaking of Tennessee Ernie, whom we hired. Some entertainers—it seems as though the ones with the greatest talent are the ones who are the nicest people. The ones that—if you had three acts, the opening act people would so frequently (not always, but frequently) be very difficult to get along with. You'd think they were Barrymore, you know. But Tennessee Ernie, who obviously was on his way to fame and fortune, was a completely, regular guy without making any effort to be—just had that kind of a personality. He would come down in the afternoon, walk in the casino, sit down and play dollars, in a pair of old levis, and just sit there, you know. He might be the only one in, because it'd be a quiet afternoon or something, and practically the only person there. And he made friends with two of the dealers, Lefty Riordon and Hardy Brafford. (Hardy Brafford, I believe is one of the top fellows in gambling at the Sparks Nugget right now.) And they would go out hunting together. whatever he did, he did with a flair, but without any ostentation. He's a tremendous fellow.

So, incidentally, was Margaret Whiting. Her father, of course, was Richard Whiting, who had been a very, very famous song writer. And she was, of course, a great deal more withdrawn until you got to know her, and

then she turned out to be a very nice woman. And years and years and years later, I was walking across Virginia Street bridge, and I looked at her (she's very slight, she must weigh about ninety-five pounds, about five-feet-four or five, or something like that, maybe not that tall, maybe just five-two), and she veered right over and stopped me. And she was appearing at the Mapes at that time. (This is several years ago, of course, since the Mapes had name singers.) And [laughing] I thought it was quite an interesting thing, that she remembered me from Elko [laughs], when she had spent years gallivanting about the country singing. I can't think of other names that we had there, but it's immaterial anyway, I guess.

Well, when they sold the hotel, or when Red and Mr. Bigham sold the hotel, Red Ellis asked me—he said, “Well hang on now. I've got a deal going where I might pick up a hotel in Winnemucca.” But that did not prove. And that was what is now known as the Winners Inn. (What was it called?) But at that same time Mr. Frankovich came over and offered me a job in the Commercial, but I was hesitant. Newton Crumley, despite all our bitter battles over the two-year period, was my friend; and I knew Newton pretty well, and knew if we were going to retain our friendship through the years, I had better not work for him, because he was a very, very difficult man, obviously, to work for. And the stories you would hear—although Mr. Frankovich was with him for a number of years, and they got along very well.

I understand that once Newton went into the bar at the Ranchinn (when he owned both hotels), and the bartender got too much dry vermouth in a martini that Newt had ordered, so he fired the bartender [laughs]. Now this is undoubtedly exaggerated [laughs] 'cause I don't think—. But I mean that sort of tended—he had one of the most marvelous

personalities of anybody I think that I've ever met in my whole life in the history of Nevada. He'd just charm you to death, without even trying, just a wonderful guy that way. But, of course, he had his failings and his adversaries too, I guess. But, it was really a sad, sad day for the state of Nevada when he and Eddie Questa went down in that airplane crash. Questa was really a financial genius. But Nevada lost one really, one of its great citizens of this century when Newton Crumley was killed. So anyway, I did not go to work for them.

BUSINESS MANAGER AT THE ELKO CLINIC

After leaving the Stockmen's Hotel, I joined the staff, I guess you could say, of the Elko Clinic, as the business manager, succeeding Barbara Vaughn, whose husband is a well-known Elko attorney and remains so today. I was offered the opportunity to go to the clinic as soon as it became known that I was going to be leaving the Stockmen's Hotel, and it was presented by Dr. George Collett, who was really the surgeon, physician and surgeon, who had come from the East, or from Indiana—I guess it was Indiana, the middle West, and had become a member of the doctor firm there, which was originally located in the bank building in downtown Elko. And Dr. Collett was sort of the moving force, I guess you'd say, in founding the Elko Clinic. He approached me about becoming the business manager, and so I accepted, and moved my base of operations to the clinic professional building, which at that time was located on Idaho Street, a couple of blocks east of the Ranchinn hotel.

Being a business manager of a clinic was not exactly my cup of tea since I didn't know

anything about business procedures and so on, having been mostly a typewriter pounder all my life. But I went in with a vim and tried to grasp the situation. I did find out, for a layman, quite a little bit about the medical profession, I think. The doctors there, of course, were very, very helpful, as a rule. And I was placed in an office just off the hall in the front of the building, and handed over all the accounts, and so on, for the doctors.

And I learned to my great dismay that the doctors had enough money outstanding that if they had been able to collect it all, they would've been able to build a new building then, instead of just a few years ago [chuckles]. It aggravated me considerably, and since I really had very little, practically no training, really, in bookkeeping and that sort of thing, about the best thing I thought I could do, in order to help the doctors and try to earn my salary, was to see if I couldn't collect some of these bills. Some of them—back then in 1954—some of these bills as I went through the cards, had been going on for years without any attempt at payment, or say on a

six hundred dollar bill, there'd be five dollars paid or something.

As I say, this really aggravated me. I thought, "Well, that's ridiculous. Why haven't the doctors gotten on to these people?" So I began chasing some of them down by telephone and even stopping them on the street, one thing and another, to say, "How about at least making some kind of a payment on getting this bill taken care of?"

I had very little success in this, and didn't really have a great deal of cooperation from the doctors. I recall one situation in which Dr. Tom Hood (he was the younger Hood, Dr. T. K. Hood, recognized as one of the best surgeons in Nevada, I believe)—I took a bill into him and said, "Tom, why can't this person pay something? He owes \$550 and he's done nothing, and I know for a fact," (as you would in a small town), "he's been working steadily; that he doesn't have any other terrible indebtedness that I can think of. At least, it seems to me, he oughta be doing something to get this cleared up."

And Dr. Hood, young Doctor Hood said, "Well, Paul, I don't know. You know he did have this and that." And he enumerated a couple of things, of course, that he knew about. He said, "I guess I would—I don't think I'd press him about that right now."

So I heaved a sigh, and went back to my office. A great deal of this sort of thing, I found, occurred in the Elko Clinic, that the doctors there (naturally there was a big volume), were all making a good living, and all that sort of thing, but by and large, their main concern, practically all the doctors in the clinic, was to treat patients, and to worry about the bills afterward.

I suppose there are a great many people in Nevada who'd say, "Well, if that's the way it was in Elko, it isn't anywhere else in the state." But, I don't know, about anywhere else in the state,

except that I do know that in Elko, actually, in a reversed way, it was a tremendous tribute to the medical profession, in my view, because they just were so busy that they didn't have time to collect the money that was owed them. And it was an eye opener to me after hearing about the doctors and how they soak you, and how they wouldn't treat you unless you had money, and you had to practically come in with it in your fist.

In the clinic, at that time, besides Dr. Collett; there was Dr. Les Moren, who has since become the senior physician in the city of Elko, in the clinic. I guess there are a couple of other doctors practicing outside the clinic also. In fact, I know there's an ophthalmologist there and so on. But Dr. Moren is now the senior doctor, as it were. At that time, besides Dr. Collett and Dr. Moren, there was Dr. Charles Secor, who was an elderly man at that time, and was one of the, really almost old time doctors in Elko, very sharp-talking, hard-sounding character, who *wasn't* [laughs], really.

And then there was, of course, Dr. A. J. Hood (the surgeon's father) who'd been for many years, and I think was then, one of the Southern Pacific doctors. Of course, Dr. A. J. Hood is practically—. He practiced in Elko so long, he's almost a legend there in the medical profession. There was Dr. Jake Reed, who is still with the clinic. He's a younger doctor—not so young now, but was young in '54. Dr. Reed, I think, is as good an internist as you'd find in Nevada. Then later, let's see, there was another doctor or so. And of course, over the years, why it's changed; except for Dr. Reed and Dr. Moren, I guess there's been a complete turnover. And I do not know now; I can't remember the names of the doctors that are at the clinic now.

A few years ago (not too many years ago), perhaps five, somewhere in there, the clinic

built a new, modern, beautiful clinic building, and of course, they operate out of that now. Elko has, I guess—I think there are ten doctors there now. And actually, population-wise, I believe the ratio should be—that there are twice as many doctors in Elko as would be indicated by the size of the city of Elko, something like that, several more at least. But, of course, the Elko Clinic draws patients from a tremendous area, some I guess, even from southern Idaho, as strange as it may seem. But it's still as busy as ever in this new facility, which is a gorgeous place actually. In my recent visit there, why, I found that their practice is just as busy as it ever was, despite the fact that they have many more doctors. And of course, I presume they're just about all specialists except for Dr. Moren, who is the only G.P., but who is so well liked that they actually about a year or so ago they had a "Dr. Moren Day" in Elko, similar to the "N. Edd Miller Day" on campus here; and the whole town turned out, and they had great banners across the street, and all that sort of thing. And of course, this was a very tremendous tribute to Dr. Moren.

The health facilities, generally, in Elko are far above the average for towns of this size. As you know, some of the towns, for instance, Wells has been trying for a generation to attempt to get one doctor. But fifty miles away is the Elko Clinic, and makes it difficult, I think, for a doctor to survive in Wells. This is also true I believe—well, they've had a great deal of trouble getting doctors in many Nevada towns—smaller than Elko, of course—but even to get one. And I suppose that the Elko Clinic in northeastern Nevada is so—it's modern, it has good doctors, it has specialists, it has everything there, and it probably is one of the factors that make doctors who might consider settling in the smaller communities in that part of Nevada

turn away and head for Reno or Las Vegas, 'cause most of them do [chuckles].

Dr. Hood, young Dr. Hood—I always thought it rather odd—you think of doctors, especially before the small automobile days, as driving to work in big long Cadillacs, and Lincolns, and this sort of thing. Dr. Tom Hood would come rattling up in an old pickup truck which he drove down to the clinic to go to work [chuckles]. I pointed this out to a stranger once. We were walking up the street, and I said, "Oh, there's Dr. Hood's car now.

And he said, "Car?"

And I said, "Yes. Parked there, right there by the clinic. That pickup."

And of course this was quite a shock, too. But the doctors there, I think in Elko—. Of course most of them had been there for some time, and at that time, why they were living pretty modestly. The home that Dr. Moren now lives in, is the home he lived in ever since I can remember, when we first became friends, and he had just come out from Minnesota, and joined with the other doctors there. Same old home.

And Dr. Collett, by the way, after I'd accepted the job, or grabbed at the job of business manager, it was just a very few months after that, that he suffered a heart attack and died, which was a stroke of bad luck to the entire community. And of course Dr. Secor and the elder Dr. Hood are long since gone, died numerous years ago.

Back when I was on the newspaper, when I was in Elko the first round, the main doctors there were Hood, Roantree and Secor. Dr. Roantree died in the intervening period. But then Dr. Secor and Dr. Hood continued in practice, and eventually joined in this clinic effort.

My routine as business manager was about what I said just a few moments ago, and I knew that I was a fish out of water. I just

simply didn't have the background. But the doctors never complained about my lack of expertise. They knew, I guess, when they hired me that I wasn't, you know, ripe to associate in a CPA firm or anything [chuckles]. So I attempted to do everything I could to keep the books going, that sort of thing, but I'm sure it never would have worked out, and luckily it didn't have time to, to work out to my disadvantage. Surely, one of these days I knew that one of the doctors would say, "Well Paul, look. Maybe we oughta make a change here."

But the health care in Elko, as far as doctors were concerned, I was there long enough to know that it was excellent at that time, and has remained so ever since. In any event, I became business manager there in early 1954, I guess it was. And summer came, and I was still struggling. I recall I was down at the clinic one Saturday afternoon, trying to catch up on some of the things (the clinic was normally closed on Saturday afternoon, of course, the doctors weren't, they were still operating; perhaps they'd have one nurse, or technician, or whatever, in the clinic), and one of the doctors stuck his head in my office and said, "That are you doing down here?"

And I said, "Well I just—." Having been in the newspaper business, a forty-hour week [laughs] was hardly known, and I hadn't paid any attention, and I said, "Well, I wanted to pick up some of these things. It seems to me—" I was doing thus and so, whatever the matter might have been.

He said, "Oh, you go on home and do this on Monday," he said, "You're not supposed to be working here."

And I thought this isn't the kind of situation I'd ever run into before to actually be told to go home by the boss, you know [laughs].

But along about, I would guess June or July (I know it was summer), and Gwen and

I were sitting out on the front porch, and the phone rang, and it was John Sanford calling from Reno, John being the editor of the *Reno Evening Gazette*. And he told me that Joe McDonald was approaching retirement, and that he'd just been at a meeting with some of the Speidel Newspaper executives, and they had to prepare to find a successor to Joe McDonald as editor of the *Nevada State Journal*. And John said, "preliminarily, the possible successor would come in and work at the *Gazette*, and then if all worked out well (of course no promises made) why, that person would succeed Mr. McDonald as editor of the *Journal*."

At that time, Mr. McDonald was not only editor of the *Journal*, but also was the president of Reno Newspapers. I've forgotten if that was the title at that time, but he had the two jobs. Publisher, that is, of both papers. And so I told John Sanford that I would certainly be interested in it and would let him know. Hung up the phone, went back out on the front porch, and sat down. Told Gwen what the call was about. And I said, "You know, the clinic is a wonderful place, the medical clinic here, but I just really don't feel that I fit in with it very well, in the job that's been assigned to me to do, and so I was just wondering about it."

And she said, "Well, do you want to go back in the newspaper business?"

And I said, "Yes, I sure do."

And she said, "Well, go call him."

So I turned around, went back in, and made the telephone call, and said, "I'll take the job. I'll take the risk." And with that I resigned from the clinic, and we moved back to Reno, and I became assistant managing editor of the *Gazette*. That was the third person down.

UNDERSTUDY ON THE *RENO EVENING GAZETTE*

John Sanford was the editor, Joe Jackson was the managing editor, and I was the assistant managing editor. So that was in August of '54, I guess. Gwen remained behind actually, to sell our home, which took her about a month, and then she came on into Reno. So from August of '54 to the end of '56, I was with the *Gazette* again, and working under Joe Jackson. Thank goodness that's the way the Speidel officers wanted to proceed, because working under Joe Jackson was a great experience, to me, and I learned a sufficient amount under Joe and John Sanford both; particularly at that time Joe, because John was in a separate office. (And I might remind that this, of course was in the old building, which was on the northerly portion of the site of the present First National Bank parking garage, in the old *Gazette*.) So I had the chance to work with Joe Jackson and John Sanford for the next, well, that'd be about a year and a half I guess, wouldn't it?

And then Mr. McDonald did retire, and he retired because he'd reached the age of sixty-five, for one thing, and of course, then when

he did that, incidentally he became executive secretary of the Lake Tahoe Area Council and spent some time at that before he completely retired due to illness. The routine of work as the assistant managing editor was very good because it was a pressure type job, as you always have in newspapers, of course, and it brushed me up again on newspaper, which I'd been out of since I'd left the *Ely Daily Times*, and which was quite a different situation.

As that assistant, I assisted Joe Jackson, the managing editor, in editing of copy, and when he was absent, taking over his post as head of the newsroom. Also, in nearly two and a half years in this second go-around on the *Gazette*, I gained most of my knowledge, such as it went, on the writing of editorials. This was because, when the editor, John Sanford, was on vacation, I wrote all of the *Gazette* editorials, which was Sanford's exclusive province when he was on the job. I wrote them on a vast amount of subjects during this training period (I guess you'd call it), but steered pretty clear of political editorials, since I was a Democrat and Sanford was a very

staunch Republican—one of the staunchest in the state, in fact.

Of course, I didn't have the privilege to make editorial comment then as a member of the *Gazette* staff, except on the rare occasions previously mentioned, when Sanford was out of town. That opportunity did not come until 1957. As 1956 closed, it was announced, in the papers, Joe F. McDonald, publisher of the *Gazette* and *Nevada State Journal* and editor of the *Journal* would retire at the end of the year. It was further announced that Charles H. Stout would succeed McDonald as publisher, and Paul A. Leonard would become editor of the *Nevada State Journal*, all effective January 1, 1957. And so it came to pass that on that date I became charged with both the chore of chief of the *Journal's* news staff and its editorial writer, a combined position, I guess you'd call it, which I held for the next sixteen years.

So I moved from the *Gazette* newsroom across the hall to a desk in the corner of the old building adjacent to Mrs. Alice Melarky, the woman's editor, and right across from the sports department, consisting of sports editor, Ty Cobb, and his assistant, Len Crocker. Ty, of course, recently resigned, or retired rather. And Crocker left the paper some years ago, and since then has been public relations man for First National Bank of Nevada. Thus I found myself suddenly responsible only to the new publisher, Charles H. Stout, who had been named to that post following several years as a second man in Speidel Newspapers, Inc. (parent company, of course, operating the two papers, and half a dozen others across the country—from the then headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colorado). So no longer was I under the benevolent but watchful eyes of editor Sanford, and the facile and biting typewriter, and also an encyclopedic knowledge of this town and state and nation. And the more direct gaze, at the same time,

of Joseph R. Jackson in the newsroom per se, managing editor, who knew his profession possibly as good or better than any other man in Nevada. Joe Jackson was quiet, seemed to have his head right into the work all the time and still knew everything that was taking place in the newsroom. And whenever he corrected someone, it was always very low toned, without any bluster or anger, but somehow or other he conveyed the idea when he corrected or changed something in a story, or criticized the way it was run, the way it was turned out, it was always in a manner that never angered you at Joe, and yet, you never forgot.

I, then, after January first of 1957, instead of being on Sanford and Jackson's side, became, in a sense, their enemy—very much all at once. It was part of my job to try to beat the *Gazette* on any breaking news, and politically, of course, to try to elect Democrats—but only if I thought they were good Democrats—to every office from constable up to president. Mr. Stout was a very tough taskmaster; at the same time fair to everyone. Also, he gave both newsrooms wide latitude, presuming that we knew our business—that is, the editors—or we wouldn't be there. Also, his was not the faint heart, when it came to publishing the news. If we had an important story and might say, touch close to libel but was in the interest of the community, he would on consultation, tell us, "Go ahead and print it." Stout is very small of stature, kind of a steely eye, and a computer mind. He was, and is, a businessman's businessman. There were times [chuckles], I'm sure, when he was about to—I felt that he'd like to throw me out the window. And there were times when I thought of telling him to find somebody else to do his eleven-hour-a-day, six-days-a-week job. But these "almosts" were few and far between.

There were a good many peculiar things and oddities at the time that I first went back [to the *Gazette*]. The United Press had as its correspondent, Robert Bennyhoff, who was probably one of the most [laughing]—the adjective hardly comes to me. Bennyhoff was a lively and digging newspaperman, who not only ran the United Press office in the *Gazette* building on the *Journal* side of the *Gazette* (the *Journal*, at that time being a member of the United Press;) and Bennyhoff really gained quite a reputation as a newspaperman in Reno and in Nevada, and at the legislature—as being highly enterprising and a hard man to back down.

I recall one occasion of the activities of Bob Bennyhoff. It concerned the reticence of the legal eagles to give a full story on something that was of big news at the time, the subject [laughing] of which I've long since forgotten. So Bennyhoff and *Journal* reporter Frank Johnson learned that there was going to be this secret meeting in a hotel room to make some big decision (and of course, secret meetings are anathema to all newspapermen) and so they learned the room, found somehow or other which room it was going to be in. They hid in the closet with pencil flashlights, I guess, and took down everything that went on at this secret meeting, which perhaps was attended by, I don't know, I suppose half a dozen people, I don't know. And, of course, then Bennyhoff and Johnson went back, and combined and wrote this story of everything that had gone on in this room, which presumably was secret and it came out in a big headline, naturally [laughs], the next day, and it completely flabbergasted the people who had this case at issue, whatever it was about.

There are a good many other stories about Bennyhoff, I guess— I didn't really have a great deal to do with Bob, because I think it wasn't

too long after that that he was transferred to a bigger job somewhere, and his place was taken by Clark Bigler, as the United Press correspondent. Clark Bigler was sort of Bennyhoff's understudy and then became Bennyhoff, as it were. Bigler did a very fine job and then went on as a—after he left United Press in Reno, established a news service and corresponded for the *Sacramento Bee*, et cetera, et cetera.

During this period, incidentally, a man whom I just had conversation with yesterday over in Carson, was an intern from the University of Nevada for the United Press, and it *would be* the United Press, because this intern was Ted Scripps, who was then learning the business, as it were, the hard way. And the word is—I guess Ted was an intern both under Bennyhoff and Bigler; I've forgotten for sure that that is true—but I remember that when Ted Scripps, who, of course, is the heir to the Scripps fortune and is a heavy owner in the Scripps-Howard newspapers and in United Press International, also, I guess, and who incidentally, has just moved back to Carson recently and is building a big home in the south end of Washoe Valley—Ted was treated just like any other intern, and particularly by Bennyhoff [laughing], who was not particularly over-awed by the fact that Ted Scripps was under his wing. That was perfectly all right with Ted Scripps, who is one of the finest men you'd ever meet, and who was a very soft-spoken, very intelligent young man, who could talk to anyone about almost anything. I think it's a fine thing that he finally decided to make his home in Carson City, in Nevada—in any event.

About a year ago, I recall, we were in Hawaii and picked up the *Honolulu Advertiser*, I guess—no, Sunday edition, I guess—*Star Bulletin*. There was a big feature story on this home that was for sale at Diamond Head by

Ted Scripps. And he was anxious to sell, so he'd priced the home down to a million and five-hundred thousand dollars and [laughs]—he did sell the home, too. Whether he got that for it, I don't know. [Laughs] But it was very interesting, because a few years before that, Gwen and I had been in his home when the United Press International meeting which was held in Honolulu—and Ted Scripps, of course, since it was United Press, invited the delegates out to his home; and it was quite an experience—it was quite a home—it was rather an old one actually, and he'd bought it from someone else.

But Ted, I think, had a good time as the intern and actually learned quite a little bit about the basics of the business which, I would venture to say has stood him in good stead as he rose and got older and became a—well, I guess to all intents and purposes, the head of the Scripps-Howard newspapers. I'm not just positive where he fits in it—which, of course, was founded by his grandfather, Edward Willis Scripps, who was one of the great newspaper barons of the last century and early in this, I guess; who was a two-fisted drinker and a hard-pounding business man; who, in opposition to the Associated Press, founded the United Press. Because, I guess, the Associated Press was a kind of a closed club, and Mr. Scripps could not gain access to the news of the Associated Press, so he said, in effect, "The hell with it, I'll show them," and he established his own news service, which now, of course is a great competitor and has been for many, many years, of the Associated Press.

THE GREAT PRESENCE

While assistant managing editor for the *Gazette*, I also covered, or helped to cover a number of stories. One assignment I did alone was memorable. Jackson said one

afternoon, after the paper had been put to bed, something to the effect of, "Paul, as strange as it seems, we have comparatively little on the life of George Wingfield. Call his office and see if he'll give you an interview." I did, and his secretary called back in a few moments and said, "Mr. Wingfield will see you now." so I gathered up a fistful of copy paper, and hustled my way over to his office in the First National Bank building on Second and Virginia Streets, to interview the man who was probably the greatest financial figure in the history of Nevada, at least up to that time, and I think even the history of Nevada—period.

When I was shown the Great Presence, Mr. Wingfield's office, it was a pretty plain type office, very plain, a few pictures on the wall; one in particular I remember—it was a picture of Bernard Baruch on the wall, and across the lower corner Bernard Baruch had written something to this effect, "To my good friend George Wingfield, who was not behind the door when the brains were passed out." This, Mr. Wingfield probably showed me, I guess, somewhere during our interview. It's hard to remember now. Mr. Wingfield, himself, was a fairly big man, to my recollection—not particularly tall, not that. In fact, he kind of looked something like I always thought George Wingfield would look [laughs]. In fact, perhaps I had seen him walking up and down the street or something like that, and had him pointed out—I'm not sure. I remember I was not surprised, as you often are when you meet someone who does not look at all like you visualized them on the telephone. He sat me down right beside his desk and pulled out the little shelf on which to write on his desk. And he was dressed, of course, in a usual, conservative business suit. I guess at that time he must've been almost seventy. I guess somewhere in that vicinity. He was very affable; after all he had told his

secretary to send me up, or send someone up—and it was I.

I sat down, and obviously, Mr. Wingfield was *not* behind the door when the brains were passed out, so he knew exactly why I was there; that he would never read what he was going to talk to me about. So. He was very businesslike, but very affable too. Once in a while, a little glimmer of humor would appear as he would tell me the stories and as I asked the questions. As I believe I've said, I guess this must've lasted an hour and a half—something like that. It was a good long time.

He did tell me of his great friendship with Bernard Baruch during the mining years down in Goldfield; and obviously felt about Mr. Baruch about the same as Mr. Baruch indicated he felt about Wingfield from the salutation on the picture.

He answered the questions, as I think I said—he said something to the effect per se, “Well, you know young man, he said, “I’m not gonna tell you everything.”

And I said, “Mr. Wingfield, we just want to get whatever our biographical things don’t mention. We find that we certainly are having great gaps in our folder concerning your life down at the paper. I’d like to get them filled in.”

And so he said, “All right. very well. What do you want to know?”

So I said, “Well, where were you born?”

Started just, right from the beginning. And he told me. And now, as I say, I can’t remember—I’d have to go down and look this up in the story when he died. He was a cowboy, driving the cattle down, drove the cattle to the railhead at Winnemucca. And once there, got his pay, and had nothing better to do, and didn’t know exactly what he was going to do, I guess. I guess in a barroom or somewhere on the street of Winnemucca, he ran into a man by the name of George Nixon. And he told me they kind of struck up

a conversation. He asked Mr. Nixon what he did. And Nixon said, “Well I’m a telegrapher over here for the railroad.”

I guess this went on over a short period of time—this kind of, struck up this kind of friendship, and eventually, I think Mr. Wingfield told me that Mr. Nixon said, “You know they’ve got a big, looks like a big mining strike going on down in Goldfield. Shall we, why don’t we go down there and see what we can do?”

Wingfield had nothing better to do, so “Sure, let’s go.

So they must’ve got on their horses or whatever, stage or something, and went to Goldfield, and that’s how it all started as far as Mr. Wingfield was concerned.

I had heard, of course, so many things pro and con about Wingfield, as a youngster. My father was very anti-Wingfield. He was a farmer, Leslie Leonard. He was a farmer where I was born down the Newlands Project. I can’t remember now what developed his animosity towards Mr. Wingfield, but it was some kind of a deal that Wingfield had put through concerning farming or something, and I guess in connection with the bank. I don’t know. But my father, just like any number of people, whatever affects them personally, adversely—the source of that animosity and the source of their trouble, of course, develops animosity. And naturally, Mr. Wingfield, highly successful, multimillionaire, and that sort of thing, just like with a big corporation—everybody hates them. But just because they’re big too, a great deal. Anyway, I didn’t carry any of these thoughts [laughs] in when I went to interview Wingfield. It was really a very satisfying interview, because he went into great detail.

When the session with Mr. Wingfield, perhaps an hour and a half, was over I returned to the newsroom with my notes,

and wrote the story of Mr. Wingfield's life—that is as much of it as he would tell me. It was probably the longest, single piece of writing I had ever done, and of course, it was not published until several years later, since obviously it was an obituary, and did not see the light of day until Mr. Wingfield died. The obituary which ran to, oh, several columns when it was published, traced Wingfield's life from the time he arrived in Winnemucca as a young cowboy, driving a herd of cattle from southern Idaho (I believe it was, or it may have been eastern Oregon) about the turn of the century, and on to his arrival in Goldfield during the great boom days of that camp, where he prospered mightily in mining investments, real estate, and so on; on to his move to Reno, and into banking, along the way. At one point during the latter twenties, I think, he owned eleven banks in Nevada, and virtually controlled both the financial and political life of the state. The financial control was obvious to all of course, while the political control was generally hinted at, and was behind-the-scenes kind of operations. Mr. Wingfield, as I recall, never ran for office, but at one time was Republican state chairman, or national committeeman, I can't remember.

One of the things that I remembered after I left, and said [snap fingers], "Oh, gosh forgot!" And then went over, and when I checked the envelope to see what Joe Jackson had said about how little he had (and sure enough it was little), there were two sheets there about Mr. Wingfield's avocation of horse racing. And of course, he did own many race horses, gallopers, that is, as opposed to trotters, pacers and so on. But he had great success with one or two of them—particularly one filly, Miss Thatcher—won many big races in semi-big time at the tracks. And Mr. Wingfield was very much of a horse-racing enthusiast. About the only thing I can recall that was an avocation

of his. Everything else was business, whether he was running the politics of the state from behind the scenes, or handling his banking activities.

Of course, all things must change, and came the Great Depression, and the statewide banking network went under and with it most of Mr. Wingfield's political clout. Nevertheless, at the time of my interview, more than two decades later, George Wingfield was still active, although the power and the glory were mostly memories. Financial power became dispersed as Nevada emerged from the Depression. At the same time, the political empire building shifted from Wingfield and his coterie of fellow Republicans, plus some Democrats, to another machine—that of a new Democratic Senator, Patrick A. McCarran, and there it remained for about two decades.

I think I only saw him once after that before his death. I got in an elevator in the Riverside Hotel, which he at one time had owned, and recognized him. We went up in the elevator. He didn't recognize me. He got off the elevator. It was the only time that I really remember that I saw him again.

As a matter of the newspaper—when I finished the biography or the obituary—actually is what it was—we rolled it up and put it in Mr. Wingfield's envelope in the newspaper. And then my transfer came from the *Gazette* to the editorship of the *Journal*, and something recalled it to me one time, so I went to Joe Jackson over across the hall and said, "Joe, you remember the time I interviewed Wingfield?"

And he said, "Yeah."

I said, "Do you still have that story?"

He said, "Oh, yes. I ran across that just a few weeks ago."

I said, "Well, Joe, now that I'm over here on the *Journal* if George Wingfield dies

on *Journal* time, do I get that? Do I get the obituary?” [chuckles]

And so Joe agreed that it would all depend on when Mr. Wingfield died as to which paper would get the story first, and we’d just go use it.

And you know now—it’s funny how time’ll erase these things—I can’t remember now whether it ran first in the *Journal* or in the *Gazette* because I don’t remember what time of the day Mr. Wingfield died. Rather a little bit indicative of newspapers in some way, you know [chuckles].

THE MCCARRAN MACHINE

First elected U. S. Senator in the 1932 election, Pat McCarran served from March of 1933 to September of 1954. Some would say, I guess, that he *served* only for the first few years of his long incumbency; after that he *ruled*. The McCarran machine was built and perpetuated through the usual political appointments, to some extent, but even more so by a rather novel approach—I guess it’s novel. He selected young Nevadans bent on a career in law (he, himself, of course, was a noted Reno attorney), saw to it that they got their degree, and they then returned to their native state to practice, and to be a force in politics, with great attention to McCarran politics. Some went into politics in Nevada, themselves. Some remained out of it directly, but nearly all, I think, over the years remained a force in politics anyway, and with great attention to McCarran’s brand. And they always remained loyal to him, and as such, of course, helped McCarran control the machine and perpetuated it for many, many years. One of those, incidentally was Julian G. Sourwine, who joined McCarran’s staff in Washington, counseled him, and served as the Senator’s speech writer. Sourwine, a man of great brilliance, later became chief counsel

for the congressional committee delving into the Communist threat. (Is that Eastland’s committee?) Still is, I guess, in similar work in Washington.

But really, one of the great—I thought it was a terrific idea, when you get right down to it, to do what McCarran did with the young men. A shining example is Grant Sawyer, who was a McCarran man certainly, but really was his own man, too. Of course, by the time he was elected governor, I guess Senator McCarran was dead. Yes, because that would have been, oh, three, four years after his death. But I don’t know whose—I would imagine that probably Pat thought of this himself—would get these young men, get them to Georgetown law school, or whatever law school it was. I don’t know. But they would go back there, get their training, then come back to Nevada. Of course, in the first place, they were lawyers, and lawyers are articulate. In the next place, they saw to it that they were here, and I don’t believe he ever lost any of them, as I mentioned. And they formed a sort of an amorphous machine that was very difficult to put your fingers on, and yet the Republicans knew darn well that it [laughs] was going on. I don’t ever remember that this has been done. In fact, I’ve written about state problems of other states, and I always thought Pat really, really, really knew what he was doing.

Incidentally, it’s my opinion that Pat McCarran was the very epitome of the physical appearance of a United States Senator. I remember once I had lunch with him at the Riverside for some reason. I was there first (not only I, but a couple of other newsmen I suppose)—can’t remember the reason for the luncheon. Pat came in the swinging doors, with the waving, gray hair and ruddy, Irish complexion, and the walk. He looked just like a caricature, not a caricature,

but an actor, strong in what you picture in a United States Senator.

From a newspaperman's view, Pat McCarran's long stay in the United States Senate was anything but tedious. The Senator was always good copy for Nevada reporters, and even better for editorial writers, whether they were extolling him or castigating him; it was sort of divided. The voters, of course, mostly liked him. I think he was elected to the Senate four times, and of course, he was never defeated.

I joined the staff of the very anti-McCarran *Reno Evening Gazette* in August of 1954. And one evening in late September, received a phone call from John Sanford, *Gazette* editor. "Paul," intoned the editor, "tomorrow is going to be a mighty busy one down at the office. The reason is that Pat McCarran has passed into the great beyond. We just had word he dropped dead during a political rally down in Hawthorne." It was a shocker of a message, and it *was* busy in the *Gazette* newsroom, not only the next day, but a good many days thereafter.

Every move the Senator had made, major moves, and a host of minor ones, too, almost from the time that he passed the bar, were reviewed in the paper; even down to the fact that as a practicing attorney, McCarran had represented Mary Pickford when she sued for divorce from Owen Moore many years before; and had been given a mansion—sort of mansion—at the corner of Belmont (now Arlington Avenue) and Court Street—given by Miss Pickford, for McCarran's fee, for getting the divorce. The late Joe McDonald, then publisher of the *Journal* and *Gazette* and editor of the *Journal*, was one of the Senator's great supporters, and one of the outstanding editors too, I guess, in Nevada history. Editorially, he heaped great paeans of praise on the Senator, of course—the late Senator.

And across the hall, the *Gazette's* Sanford, as could be expected, was much more subdued about Senator McCarran's accomplishments.

Of course, the *Gazette* was very strongly Republican, and Pat, of course, was rather strongly Democratic, a Democrat. The *Gazette*, I think, treated him fairly, but did not hesitate to say some of the things that were obviously not in keeping with their philosophy of government.

The *Journal*, and Pat McCarran, of course, was a tremendous friend of Joe McDonald's. The *Journal* really lauded the Senator as though he were (and perhaps he was) the greatest name that Nevada's ever had in the United States Senate, with the possible exception of Key Pittman, both of whom were Democrats, and of course, I was a Democrat, even though I was working on the *Gazette*. Oddly enough, the *Gazette* had on its staff mostly Democrats, with the exception, of course, of the top people: John Sanford and Joe Jackson. But the reporter staff were mostly Democrats.

Yes, it was quite a period of—quite a high point in politics all right in Nevada, because, of course, Senator McCarran's death just set off a tremendous chain of events, as it were. And of course, let's see, the appointment of Ernest Brown was by—that was Charles Russell, I guess, Governor Russell's appointment. Yes, that caused quite a little excitement in the political arena of Nevada.

Ernest Brown, incidentally, was really, I think, one of this city's most dedicated and fearless public servants, despite our disparity in political parties, I got to know Ernest Brown. I knew him perhaps a little bit before, but I got to know him very well, as editor of the *Journal*, particularly in connection with Charlie Hendel, who was—what's the big point? It had to do with veteran's pensions or something along that line. And I remember

that Charlie Hendel went to Ernest Brown and (this was subsequent to his serving as Senator) and Ernest Brown supported what Charlie Hendel (who had been an assemblyman, but had been defeated) had in mind on this. And in light of that, I went up and talked to Mr. Brown about it, and we became quite good friends over this, just because of this one thing.

And you seldom run into a man of any greater integrity or any smarter than Ernest Brown. I suppose, elsewhere, you know the story about when Ernest Brown was district attorney, and they were going to send a bunch of what were considered “hood” labor leaders over from California, and they were going to strike something. (Well, someone else would know more about it.) Anyway, Ernest Brown—seems almost incredible in this day that this would happen—as district attorney, took the sheriff, and a good many deputies (some, I guess, just immediately sworn in), and went up and stopped them at the state line, with rifles. And they turned around and went back. I think on one occasion somebody got smart with Ernest Brown, and he batted him one and knocked him off the side of the road. Nothing was ever done; they just turned around and went home. That was the end of that. This was typical of him.

Of course, he didn’t serve very long, because then Senator Bible, or Nevada Attorney General Bible—I guess, he wasn’t at that time, but he had been—ran for Senator. And Alan Bible defeated him and of course, went on to serve twenty years, give or take, in the United States Senate.

Regardless of why, though, there is no question that Pat McCarran had done many things for the state of Nevada. No matter what (’course he had almost as many enemies as friends), but there was one thing for sure, and that was that he really amounted to

something. His passing, to use a trite but true phrase, I guess you could say, marked the end of an era.

One addenda to the reign of Pat McCarran might be mentioned. At least since the turn of the century, Nevada’s produced only two Senators who could actually be called national figures. Both, I’m happy to say, are Democrats, or were Democrats; one, of course, was McCarran; the other was Key Pittman, who was elected five times, but died just after election day in November of 1940 and never served the fifth term to which he was elected. Governor E. P. Carville appointed as his successor, Berkeley Bunker of Las Vegas. The point here, I think, is that Bunker’s appointment marked the first time that southern Nevada had succeeded in getting a resident of its area into high office in this state, and foreshadowed the coming power of fast-growing Clark County— which twenty-five years later, give or take a few years, was to dominate state politics, because, of course, as they always say, “That’s where the votes are.”

THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES FELLOWS

Anyway, the behind-the-scenes fellows, John Mueller (boy there was a character) and Norman Biltz, of course, worked with Wingfield, and then later, of course worked with McCarran, and of course, their activities were sort of—kind of in a sense like Wingfield’s, I think. They weren’t very much in the news, but everybody knew who they were, what they were doing; and what they did, I suppose was sometimes bad and sometimes good. I recall at one time, one of the few times I remembered Norm Biltz really saying anything for public consumption. At the time, somebody was talking about whether or not Reno should attempt to get great industry that would hire say, two thousand people, or something along

that line—a big thing. And other people said, “No, we don’t want that; we want lots of small industry,” which of course, eventually came to pass, to some extent. If I remember right, Norm Biltz said, “Nah, we don’t want any industry. We’ve got enough going in Nevada now.” And that was one thing, of course, that was impossible to stop, even by Norm Biltz [laughs], because the industry did come. But I think along with his statement that he didn’t want any industry, was the statement that the reason we didn’t, was we couldn’t stand too great a population growth in the Truckee Meadows—in western Nevada. And look what time has done to prove that Norman Biltz was exactly right.

John Mueller—oddly enough I knew John Mueller [laughs], knew him personally. I mean, it was, “Hello John,” “Hello Paul,” that sort of thing. Norm Biltz just sort of knew me as “one of the news guys,” I guess, or something like that. But John, I knew real well, who was a blustering character with every alternate word a curse, you know, but all of it just done sort of like you throw your arms up and just laugh at something. And he would say, “Well that s.o.b.” (only that isn’t the way he would say it), and you know he was always [laughs], John Mueller was always ready with a big joke, and even as late as just a few months ago, somebody told me a joke, and said, “Say, did you ever hear that joke? You remember John Mueller. Did you hear this joke?” And then he told me the joke, whoever it was. It was very, very recently. And of course, in the service, there were a couple of Nevadans, I think, served as officers, and he was a colonel. John was a colonel in the—. I can’t remember now whether it was quartermaster or what it was.

But anyway, there are all kinds of stories the way he operated in the Army. He operated as a civilian; he just put it to work in the

Army. I guess he made it go, because he produced enough stories about how he’d angle things, and so on and so forth, with the Army to get what he wanted for his outfit. And [laughs] these stories. I’ve also heard recently, just in late years—darn, I can’t remember particularly who it was that served with John Mueller—Bill Woodburn? I just don’t remember. You always knew that he was the right arm of Norman Biltz, and yet it never seemed as though John was really doing anything or cared about anything—was the offhand type—always with a joke and some sort of a story. But he was busy, all right [laughs].

When I was in the Stockmen’s Hotel (that would have been in ’52, I guess), a resident of Wells (because he was married to a diGrazia) used Wells, at least as his starting point (although he’d come from East coast), to start a campaign to run for Senator, against Bible, in the primaries. Well, Tom Mechling came into Elko, and he was making his rounds and was beginning to generate a little enthusiasm about cleaning out those crooks in Washington and so on. (Whoever heard of such a tack? You know! It seems as though every politician that runs for Senator is gonna clean up the mess in Washington.) But that was Mechling’s main point as I remember. In any event, he came to the Stockmen’s Hotel and [to] Mr. Ellis, and he said he would like to broadcast from the local radio station, in the hotel. And so he broadcast in front of the bear, in front of this big Kodiak bear that we had in this case, and caused quite a little stir. And that’s my first recollection of meeting Tom Mechling; almost my last one, I guess. But he generated quite a lot of interest, and he had a big crowd in the small lobby of the Stockmen’s Hotel. I don’t know, from there, of course, he went on. It was just one of his stopping places, but it was kind of an interesting little political

gimmick that showed that Mechling, I think, knew his way around politically.

When he saw that bear, he thought well, he could give a talk in front of that bear with a microphone, get some pictures taken, I suppose, and that sort of thing, why, it would really help him along on his way.

And then of course, in '52 he then defeated Bible in the primary, and of course, the other part of that is history, what with Biltz and Mueller taping his conversation in which they offered him a proposition, to back away—forgotten just what that was now—. But anyway, that was the end of Mr. Mechling. And very shortly after that, incidentally (it would have to be, because that was still in '52), he came back to Reno and was sort of entrapped by Biltz and Mueller, who put an end to his political aspirations. That was after he defeated Bible. And so then he ran against Senator Malone, George Malone, who, with the backing of the Mueller and Biltz factions, and so on and so forth, Senator Malone was elected and defeated Mechling, by not a great deal, I guess. Guess that's politically the essence of that. That particular campaign I was in Elko, of course, so I was a little bit removed from the center of the situation here.

THE FLOOD

Back here in Reno city, during my nearly two and a half years at the *Gazette*, on my second stint with the papers, I looked back and it indicates that there were numerous big stories, both of the blockbuster type and the variety that have longer range implications, undoubtedly, the biggest story in the "four horsemen" category, while I was assistant managing editor of the *Gazette*, was the great flood of the Truckee River in December of 1955. There'd been a previous one, of course, in November of '50. And since, there have

been some that might be called minor, because of the size of the two in '50 and '55. My recollection is that the '55 flood was probably the biggest story we had at the time while I was assistant managing editor of the *Gazette*.

There'd been, if I remember, really heavy snow in the mountains, and about a week or so before Christmas, the precipitation turned to rain, as a warm front hit the Sierra in western Nevada. Incredible, for this area, it rained and rained for about three days. The rain caused great snowbanks to slide down into the channel of the Truckee, the Little Truckee, and other tributaries. Renoites, remembering a similar flood, oh, five years earlier almost— (almost exactly five years) began to get jittery, especially, of course, owners of the businesses that operated along the riverbanks, downtown Reno; and they had good reason. The river rose higher and higher, and broke its banks, and roared down Island Avenue on the south, and down First Street on the north, and the Truckee River Lane also on the north, inundating many businesses, despite vigorous sandbagging. It was the biggest flood, as I recall, ever to hit Reno, at least in modern times; the river flow reaching, if I remember right, 27,000 cubic feet per second, which was double or somewhere near double what's considered flood stage. Or something like that. I can't remember what flood stage was, but I thought it was around nine thousand feet or something of that sort, I think.

I think it must have been about the twenty-second of December or somewhere in there when that flood came in, just before Christmas. The water got higher, and higher, and higher. The water from the flood roared right over the tops of the downtown bridges, and split the city in two, temporarily, really! The Reno newspapers were then housed in

the old *Gazette* building, on the rear part of what is now the First National Bank parking garage. Water found its way into the basement of the building via a long-forgotten ditch channel—covered ditch channel, of course—and the newspaper press was located there. Pumps were brought into action though, and avoided flooding and immersing of the press. Flood waters receded, oh, just a day or two before Christmas, I think, leaving debris and damaged business houses and destruction in its wake.

Generally, that time I was on the *Gazette* was an exciting one in the newspaper business. The flood particularly with, oh, just scads of sidebar stories naturally, developing beside the main story, the flood. Most of the latter news—the main story that is—came from the old city hall, then located at First and Center Streets, adjacent to the newspaper building. There, headquarters for fighting the flood were established, with Edward Pine, an engineer and a reserve colonel, in general command. So to get the latest factual news on the condition of the flood, reporters had to negotiate the distance from the newspaper building to city hall by walking along the sandbags down Lincoln Alley to First Street, and then going up the front steps to city hall. And I guess the water must have been a foot and a half deep, just hurtling down there and bang, into the Reno Garage. But that was one of the ways I made contact to keep up on what the flood situation was.

At flood peak, the water was pouring down First Street about eighteen inches to two feet deep. It was several weeks before the last vestiges of the effects of the flood were erased, of course. Some of the hardest hit businesses, I guess, include the Chrysler agency at Island and Sierra (later Home Furniture building, Breuners, and now Ardans), the Riverside Hotel, Gray Reid's at First and Sierra (now

movie houses I believe), and the Mapes Hotel, I think, although it's fairly well protected—many others of course.

And I lived out in southeast Reno at that time. A deputy sheriff lived next door to me. His name was Wallie Toussaint. As I drove down Virginia Street, why he's stopping all cars and turning them around, and no one could get back and forth across the bridges, any of them. The water was going down, practically through the Riverside Hotel, and on down Court Street on one side, and just whooping it up past the police station, which is the southerly part of the parking garage site now, and the old city hall. Anyway, the morning of the flood as I came to work, I was, of course, turned back by the deputy sheriff who was my neighbor, and who said, "You can't get across there." And it was quite obvious since the water was just piling across the top of the Virginia Street bridge. So I went over to the sheriff's office, in the back of the courthouse, called to say—got ahold of Joe Jackson, and told him that it didn't look like I was gonna get to work. So he said, "That's all right. Stay over there by the sheriff's office, and see if anything's going on over there other than flood." He had everybody else on the flood anyway, I guess. I checked in at the sheriff's office, and picked up a little item or two, phoned it in. Then I got back in the car, and—odd situation—got back in the car, and drove down Mill Street, and as I approached where the Second Street bridge (the old, iron, Second Street bridge, of course) crossed, there were two men standing in front of the bridge watching the flood pouring beneath them [chuckles]. And, of course, that was due to the matter of elevation and so on. And here the main bridges in Reno were inundated, and the bridge down by the police station (where the police station is now) there was no trouble at all. Cars were driving back and forth, so I

went right on across and got back to the office. But the flood was an experience. I trust Reno won't have to put up with another one like that. But I suppose it could happen. I think it rained almost continuously about three days or something like that—unbelievable.

Away from the flood, while still assistant managing editor of the *Gazette*, came a big turnover in city administration with Len Harris, operator of a big retail meat company and a former deep-sea diver, elected mayor. Brilliant and hearty, and open-handed, and carrying a whole fistful of ideas that he soon learned could not be put into effect, he and the new council ran into many a combat with each other, other high officials, and with the constituency, and the press. What the issues were that brought on all the bickering, I really can't remember [laughs] now, because of course, they just went by one after another. I do remember though, that one of the most level-headed members of the council was a short, peppery, bar owner by the name of Benny Maffi, who tried to keep the council on an even keel while Mayor Harris was getting his bearings on how the city administration should function.

Mayor Harris, I guess, was open-handed with the city's money. Well, that is, I recall once, following a big snowstorm, that he called out practically every city vehicle to clear the streets of snow. Crews worked around the clock and the bill was, for those days, astronomical. As I recall though, the mayor had promised the voters that if he was elected, he'd keep the streets clear of snow in the event of a big storm. So the operation kept an election promise, but the cost caused his good intentions to sort of boomerang.

I think it must be said though, that he was just as open-handed with his own money, the mayor. At any public bar, any Dutch treat cocktail party, whatever type of

function where you had to buy the drinks, hardly anybody could buy one, because the mayor always had his money down first. And people didn't argue very much with Mayor Harris, as he was about six-foot-three, and weighed about two hundred and twenty pounds [chuckles]. A happy disposition actually, in those days, however. I think that his personal spending habits, while he was mayor, incidentally, were in large part due to his financial troubles later on. It was very costly for Mayor Harris to be mayor.

Whatever the faults of the city's administration during those years—and there were a number of them—the activities of the mayor and council (elected separately then, of course), were most certainly interesting, and they made for exciting news and editorial comment.

THE PINNACLE OF MY CAREER; WORK WITH THE *NEVADA STATE JOURNAL*

The decade of the 1950s was one of excitement and change in Nevada, nearly all of it, I think, for the better, I guess. However, to those living and working in the ten years the events passed by, even in the newspaper business, they went by without conscious knowledge of how important they were at the time. You have to look back, I guess, to recognize just what the decade brought about—some of the things that it brought about. Doing that now, twenty years or so later, give or take, it's astonishing, I guess, how big the news was in the '50s, and what a great decade Nevada passed through then.

For instance, in 1955 (I'm sure it was), the mid year of those ten years, the sales tax—then common in many other states—came to pass in Nevada. “A sales tax in Nevada?” [laughs] [was] the thought, you know. Most residents of the state who got over into California from time to time, were always slightly shocked at having a sales tax added to their purchases over there, you know, in restaurants and stores. I seem to think, looking back then, that every time that happened, they thought,

“Thank heaven we don't have a sales tax in Nevada.” But suddenly, or it seemed suddenly anyway, we had this awful burden in our own state. We had so long advertised and boasted in Nevada, “No state income tax, no inheritance tax, no this tax, and that tax—and no sales tax,” and so on. Well, besides the sales tax, there were a good many other things.

In the field of education there was a great change, of course, as we had talked about before. There was the voluminous and famous Peabody report, which was the formula, basically I guess, to support the growing (and many people say) insatiable needs for education in a growing state. Nevada lawmakers have passed legislation for many and expensive reports from out-of-state experts that have gathered on the shelves here and there ever since. But this time, a report was acted upon and the formula, in essence, became a law.

The '50s also saw a tremendous mining boom, probably the greatest one in all history—in fact, I guess without doubt, the greatest mining boom. But it really caused

only a ripple as time went by in the '50s. It wasn't like a big mining strike in old Nevada, or anything of that sort; didn't stir that kind of excitement; a far, far cry, of course, in the interest it raised from the great days of the Comstock Lode, for instance. And yet, in that decade of the '50s, measurement of mining, net proceeds of mines exceeded any other comparable period in the history of the state, greater by far than the production in all the history of the Comstock Lode. But in the news, I think probably the end result by the inspector of mines and whoever announced this total, was a good important story, I guess, in the newspaper—but about one; and that was the end of that, as far as this tremendous production in the '50s (most of which I guess came from Kennecott and Weed Heights, I would imagine, the biggest bulk of it, and perhaps some from—I think it was Duval operating then, I guess; I don't know for sure. But anyway, most of it, I'm sure was Kennecott and other mines around Ely.) Well, I guess basically, that's the oddity of the fact, that the '50s were greater in mining, but hardly a shadow of Comstock in excitement.

In the '50s, another piece of legislation continues to have repercussions even today, and that was the passage of the Nevada right-to-work law, which prohibited a closed shop, I guess—that was the issue. That law, after its passage by the legislature (and I've forgotten the year), has been upheld by the voters for two or three times I guess. And all this, of course, despite the herculean efforts by the leaders of labor to get it off the books. The passage of the right-to-work law was sparked when the bartenders, and I guess the culinary workers went out on strike over the Fourth of July weekend, in 1949. It was almost in the '50s anyway. And it was by the time they got the right-to-work law passed. And the main feature, of course, the Fourth of July, then, was

the Reno Rodeo, which has since been moved, but, of course, it was one of the big events of the year, and here this great damper was put on it by labor, and stirred the powers that be, that eventually wound up in passage of the right-to-work law. That's essentially about what happened.

Another law in the legislature also still has effect, strong effect on the state, and one that can't be debated on either, by hardly anyone, as being a very, very good effect, was the passage of the free port law, of course, you know, made tax free the warehousing of goods in Nevada which were destined to go to other states. Pushed behind the scenes by the political, powerful duo of Norm Biltz and Johnny Mueller, and out [in] full glare of publicity by a good many Reno businessmen with Frank Bender, himself a warehouseman, in the vanguard, the free port law, later after its passage, was approved by the voters as a part of the Nevada Constitution.

INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 80

Then too, in the '50s, the great battle started over the construction of Interstate Highway 80 through the Reno-Sparks area. And probably more words were written and spoken over where the freeway should go, than any other public topic in the 1950s and maybe forever and ever [chuckles]. Early on, the Nevada State Highway Department (early '50s, maybe even before then) suggested in the press, with a map to my recollection, that the freeway should go roughly down Seventh Street in Reno, curve southward just a little bit as it approached Sparks, and so on out to Vista—gone. This recommendation, since the freeway was just on somebody's drawing board back somewhere, didn't get a great deal of attention in those early days of the brewing fight to come. But, in the years following the

'50s, the so-called Seventh Street route was one, but only one, of the possible corridors through which the interstate was supposed to go. There was also suggested that the Court Street route, the Third Street route, and a fourth proposal (which eventually became the focal point of the battle in the '60s, I'm sure—by then it was the '60s) was a bypass north of Reno. This latter suggestion was, of course, going completely around the city; had the backing of the late Walter Baring, Nevada's only member in the House of Representatives. Here in Reno, with the backing of the congressman, the strongest proponent, as I recall, of bypassing Reno to the north was a man named Thomas W. Macaulay.

I, incidentally, editorialized very strongly, not only against the bypass, but *for* the Third Street route, which I felt would bring the maximum business into the city of Reno, by having a freeway go down, right past—generally following the railroad tracks. For my pains, Mr. Macaulay branded me as the “tool of the gamblers” in letters to the editor, and I guess in speeches and so on and so forth, even though not a single member of the gambling fraternity ever approached me to suggest the freeway should go through the city. I never had a single one come to me, say anything to me, even indirectly, about it that I can remember.

The Third Street route, of course, didn't win either. One day into Reno, came a top official of the United States Bureau of Public Roads. And I can't remember his given name, but his surname was Murrow, and he was a brother of the famous news correspondent Edward R. Murrow. On a visit to the newspaper, he discussed the location battle with our then publisher, Charles Stout, and informed him that the freeway would be located between the two paths that were under the strongest contention, namely Third Street

and a bypass to the north; said that the route would be between them.

There were a good many persons who opined that—well maybe I ought to intersperse here that public meetings were held to hear all sides of the controversy, and then finally, just as Mr. Murrow said, he announced where the freeway route was to be; and it was to follow the Seventh Street route, which the State Highway Department had suggested some years before.

I think, my recollection is that at the time, everybody said, or a good many people said, that it was just a compromise—the fact that they put it in the middle. But I've always believed a little bit opposite, recalling that the State Highway Department had had this route in mind long, long before. And I just think that the Bureau of Public Roads and the State Highway Department got together and were in accord on where the freeway should go—that is, that it would—coming into Reno from the west, for instance, it would go just north of Mountain View Cemetery, pass the University just oh, a block or so to the south, and would cross over Wells Avenue at about Seventh Street, and continue through Sparks about a block south of B Street. And that's what they had always decided, and after all the sound and the fury had settled, they just went ahead and did it that way.

Among other items in the '50s, the primary and secondary education were having their innings in the Peabody report, and sort of, in this mid-decade in the twentieth century that higher education came in for a much more spectacular, if not particularly productive role. A professor on the Reno campus (it was the only campus then, I guess) maintaining that higher education in Nevada was at a very low ebb, circulated a petition at the University, decrying what he described, generally speaking anyway, as a sad state

of academic affairs at the University. And he blamed this situation on the University administration. For weeks— long time anyways, controversy raged, with the main target of Richardson and his supporters being the University president at the time, Dr. Minard Stout. It was a great story for the papers, and especially for the reporters who were out covering the campus because it stirred things up. The Board of Regents, of course, strongly backed Dr. Stout, as I guess as they were not only entitled to but perhaps should, I guess, back the administration. They eventually fired Prof Richardson. But Prof Richardson was not one to meekly slink out of the town, or out of the fight. He pressed his case in the courts, and eventually the state supreme court, Nevada Supreme Court ordered him reinstated to his job. I don't recall if he stayed actually. I guess not. But he won his case anyway, and then left. It was a victory, I'd say, for freedom of expression by faculty members on campuses. But it didn't really set a hard and fast precedent of that sort.

Some years later, as everyone will remember, another Board of Regents fired an English professor, Paul Adamian. And that all, of course, occurred during the later heydays of the great campus protests. The Adamian case also made for big news over an extended period of time, and as a matter of fact, I notice it's still in the courts. It was, of course, quite different in context than that case concerning Prof Richardson. The Board of Regents held that Adamian had aided and abetted dissident students in disrupting ROTC students during a march parade, and so on, on Mackay field during Governor's Day in May of '70.

The Adamian case bounced around the courts for years and, eventually going as high as the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals—which just the other day, sent it back to the Nevada courts, and there it sits now [laughs], about

the same position as noted in a comment to the press the other day by Adamian's attorney, Charles Springer. He said, "It's back right where it was six years ago," or whatever—which was when it started, a little less than six years.

Well, anyway, back to the early 1950s, for a political glance at the big news of those days, sort of both halcyon and turbulent, I guess. This political caper was marked more by turbulence than otherwise. The cast of characters was the Republican party. The Nevada control of that party was mainly in the hands of what was called the "Old Guard," and that meant simply, I guess, that the senior members of the party did just about as they damn well pleased. If the younger members in the GOP of feted any comments or advice, they were ignored, and the resentment of this treatment, as they looked upon it, grew and grew. So about twenty-four years ago—about 1952—the younger members of the Grand Old Party organized and prepared a surprise for the Old Guard, under the leadership of such then younger members of the party as Marvin Humphrey, and Leslie Gray. And their wives were very, very active right along with them, very much so, Lucy Humphrey, and Alleta Day Gray. They kind of started—I guess they had a grass roots start in this thing. In order to build it up, they started at the grass roots, went to county conventions, state convention, and so on, and they built as they went, and they finally had the strength to throw out the Old Guard, and take over control of the Republican party—at least here in Washoe County—I guess perhaps mostly Washoe County. But, Washoe County, then was the nub of the whole situation in any event.

As this internecine conflict developed, the young party dissidents came to be known—and still are today by those who remember

that great fight within the party—as the “Young Turks.” Although the Young Turks had as a general aim the ousting of all the Old Guard, their chief antagonist, or target, or whatever one might call them, was Noble H. Getchell, who was GOP state chairman, had been for a long time. And the Young Turks got their man. Getchell, something of a mining tycoon, and after whom the University of Nevada, Reno, library is named, of course, lost forever at that time, I guess, his high place in the Republican party.

THE NEWSROOM AND STAFF OF THE NEVADA STATE JOURNAL

Coming back now toward the end of the great decade of the '50s, as I became editor of the *Journal*, I thought I might recall some of the staff members there that were important to the *Journal's*—importance to the public! I found as I took over the post of editor of the *Nevada State Journal* (which was January 1, 1957; [I] had been previously recruited as they say.) I had some outstanding staff members. Of course, I was aware of, to some extent, how outstanding they were, from having worked the, previous two and-a-third years or so, on the *Gazette*.

Among these was Frank Johnson. He was probably—in fact I'd say he's one of the most skillful reporters in the state at that time, one of the most skilled of any time, in my opinion. Frank was near genius as a newspaperman. In fact, I would say that his I.Q. would put him probably there, if you ever gave him a test. Sort of an aside to that, I think, because he was, he was at times a little difficult to get along with. If he suggested something, and you suggested that he not do that; that he go another way to do something as far as the story was concerned—why, immediately his hackles would rise, and then we would have

a little tiff, and that would be the end of that, and go ahead and do it my way [laughs], since I was boss, usually. And once in a while Frank would, of course, convince me that his way was the better. But he did have this propensity, because he was so good, and knew his way around, and certainly knew his way around Reno. He'd get the news, and write it masterfully, and use a camera with equal facility. And of course, he wrote for several years, a humorous column called the “Lighter Touch.” I happened to think of the name for the column (not that it was any great name), but it did fit, because he did write mainly about lighter things going on, either in Reno or outside. At one time I recall that Professor Higginbotham, head of the University of Nevada journalism classes, approached Frank with the idea of syndicating his column, he thought it was so good. And it *was* so good that the “Lighter Touch” sort of brought Frank Johnson almost celebrity status in Reno, for a time.

Another aside is, I guess, is that if you happened to be at a big party of some sort, and Frank Johnson was also there, and you were in a conversation, and they'd mention the “Lighter Touch” by Frank Johnson, I might say (I know this happened certainly more than once) , I would say, “Well, that's Frank Johnson right over there. The big tall man.” And of course, Frank Johnson did not look like the “Lighter Touch,” and I presume this is a regular thing among [laughs] people even of national stature—they never look as though you envision them until you—. And they would say, “Him?” [Laughs] “That big, tall drink of water writes those funny columns,” you know. And you'd have to assure them that that's who it was, and usually, of course, Frank, at a party or anything, any gathering, never displayed this streak of almost, well of humor that would compare with really humorous

writers of the day. And I suppose it's true of most of them too, or a great many of them. For instance, I met Stanton Delaplane, and he talked very seriously, he didn't rattle on in the odd way that has made him famous as a humor columnist. And the same was true of Frank Johnson. He'd be more likely to be discussing politics, or decorating his yard, or something of that sort. In fact, he didn't say very much at all, at parties. "How do you do," and waggle his head, and listen. And people talking to him, I would imagine, would think, "Well, he's a kind of a stodgy critter." And of course, the very opposite was true.

Frank eventually became the assistant managing editor of the *Journal*, but he was passed over when the managing editor's post became available on the *Reno Evening Gazette*. He felt that he should have been given more consideration for it. So he left Reno newspapers, and the *Journal*, and the newspaper business, and joined the new state administration as public relations man for the Gaming Commission, and the Gaming Control Board—I think they went together; this all of course, following the election of Paul Laxalt as governor, Laxalt being very cognizant of Mr. Johnson's capabilities. And shortly thereafter, he was named chairman of the Gaming Control Board, and he held that post during the rest of Governor Laxalt's four years. Following Laxalt's decision not to seek reelection, and with Mike O'Callaghan, a Democrat, becoming governor, Frank Johnson was looking for a job. It didn't take very long, and he soon joined the staff of the Hilton Hotel organization, and is now a vice president and in charge of Hilton's Nevada affairs with quite a large office—business portion of Hilton hotels in Las Vegas.

Johnson, incidentally, wasn't the only star reporter I had on the *Journal* by any means, when I became the editor in 1957. Another

one was James Warren Hulse, who at the time I came there was covering the courthouse and was writing a political column. He was accurate, incisive, highly intelligent; his political column was widely read, and his investigative reporting drew many readers to the *Journal* and helped to keep Reno out of what more lately would be called the "Watergate troubles." Hulse was and is very soft spoken, mild acting, but was then a hard-nosed reporter. He was a little something like Frank Johnson in a way; the way he acted was not the way that he was able to write. He was very, very seldom fooled by political machinations or anything that anyone might tell him in Reno, or for that matter, if he was over in the courthouse covering spot news of the day. And he could thread his way to the bottom of a news story with the greatest facility. Eventually, he resigned from the newspaper, to my great chagrin, and got his Ph.D., and taught for a brief time at a college in Washington—Bellingham, I think it is—and is now professor of history at the University of Nevada, Reno with—I guess he emphasizes Russian history. Well, tsk tsk [laughs]! It was really a sad day for the newspaper business when he decided to leave it for the ivy halls, and become Dr. James Hulse.

Following his joining the faculty at UNR, Jim wrote a history of Nevada, termed *The Nevada Adventure*, for use I think, primarily in secondary schools. But the book was so well done that it's always been my feeling, and I've talked to others who say the same, that even well educated adults do not feel in reading it, as though they're being talked down to. In fact, I think the reason for that—boasting a little about my profession, business—Jim has since told me that his newspaper experience made it much easier for him to write a history book—that is, to make a history book good reading. That can't be said [laughs] I don't

think for too many history books. Well, so much about Dr. Hulse—who incidentally, right at the moment is off in Oxford on a sabbatical. So maybe his turning to teaching has turned out pretty well at that. After all, I doubt that he would be in England and do that sort of thing if he were working as a reporter.

The third star reporter who also left newspapering— seems they all flee, and I think in those days it was actually due to the fact that the pay was just too low. As time has gone on, though, the pay has gotten better, even considering inflation. Reporters are better paid, even comparable to living standards of fifteen, twenty years ago; they're better paid now than they were then. So they don't up and leave the first chance they get. This third star reporter's name was Arthur Long, or Art Long—worked very closely with Frank Johnson in getting spot news. In the dead of night, a phone call would come just, not too long before deadline, say, and they would be sitting at their desk writing something perhaps for the following day or something, and we'd get a call, say, a fatal automobile accident out on the highway or something. And Frank Johnson and Art Long—one'd grab the camera and the other a wad of copy paper and bang! out the door they'd go. Be back or make their phone call and dictate the story, or whatever, in a hurry. And Art Long was every bit as good in this field as was Frank Johnson. And so they worked very closely in getting spot news.

Art Long later became the editor of "Entertainment," which is the weekly insert in both the *Nevada State Journal* and the *Reno Evening Gazette* and did an excellent job. Principally, he knew Reno night life—Art Long did—as probably no other newsman in this whole town, whether in electronic or printed media. He was full of verve, very inquiring, just as inquiring as a reporter

can be, and with just about the right touch of cynicism, which made him a valuable, valuable asset to the *Journal* for many years. Long left us and went to the Chamber of Commerce—PR man— then to Harolds Club, I think, and is currently public relations man for John Ascuaga's Nugget.

When I joined the *Journal* staff, Frank Sullivan was the managing editor, but mostly this was just a title thing. Frank had a penchant for getting the paper made up just as fast as possible; if he came in at two o'clock, by three-thirty or so he would have it about—have page one (which was mainly his concern) made up. And then sort of his day's work done, why, he'd vanish to the Waldorf Club, or Waldorf bar, which'd be to the back door of the paper to the back door of the Waldorf. (At that time, of course, the *Gazette* and *Journal* were both published at the north end of where the First National Bank parking lot now is, and you go right across Lincoln Alley into the Waldorf.) And sometimes, in fact more often than not, why, Sully'd have the front page of the paper (which was supposedly a morning paper) all made up by three or four o'clock in the afternoon [laughs].

In those days the national and international news appeared on page one, because Sully got that news quickly over the wires of the United Press. The local news, on the other hand, no matter how big and how important it was, went on what was known as the "back page," main local page is usually the more correct title for it, I guess. That page was edited and the dummy made up for putting into form by Robert Trego. Thus, Sully made up the front page and Trego the back page, and as I remarked, "Never the twain shall meet."

This lack of consultation [chuckles] resulted in an almost impossible situation, of course. Trego, who was the city editor, was really the editor. And since Ty Cobb, who

was officially the assistant managing editor to Sullivan, was also sports editor, and so Ty, of course, who was highly competent and highly motivated toward getting the news, was so busy getting out the sports section of the *Journal* (which was his duty—he was assistant managing editor only sort of off-hand), just wasn't where he could take the time and wasn't in a position of authority to do so, so that's the way it went on.

Bob Trego's wife, Peggy, who was a very accomplished reporter (and whom, as I recall, Bob Trego had married as a result of a newsroom romance), was on the police beat [which] she covered very well, and also Peggy covered other events. And whenever she had her own beat covered, of course, why she read novels or other newspapers or whatever came to pass while she was waiting for the paper to come out, or waiting for Bob to get finished up. The Tregos had a shaggy dog which they brought to the newsroom daily at that time [laughs], and the dog invariably stretched himself right across the main aisle in the old *Journal* side of the building, and everybody going or coming had to leap over the dog [laughing] in order to get to his desk. And of course, I just felt all this just had to come to a screeching halt.

So after consultation with the publisher and so on, we announced that Art Long, who was one of our star reporters, would be transferred to the *Gazette*; that we didn't need as many reporters as we had at the *Journal*, which was really a circuitous way, I guess you'd say, of changing things. Mrs. Trego, Peggy, would not hear of Art being transferred out of the *Journal* which he loved, and his wife was a dealer and so they worked a similar shift, while Art was on the *Journal*. (She was then and I think still is, a dealer for Harrah's.) And so, Peggy wouldn't hear of Art's being transferred, because it would mean that he

and his wife would never see each other, and of course, we were aware of that. So, both Tregos quit. And incidentally, they bought some property at Unionville, high in the hills of Pershing County, I guess, and have lived there happily ever since. And of course, Art Long remained on the *Journal*—really a great move for all concerned.

Frank Sullivan, who had served as a naval officer in World War II and could have become editor of the *Journal*, instead remained kind of a problem to us, although a low key one. Sully just left his opportunity behind him and remained a routine desk man, which was one of the reasons that I, of course, was named editor of the *Journal*. Eventually, of course, it became necessary to, in effect, demote Frank Sullivan to just the job of wire editor; that is, handling the make-up, and Ty Cobb, who is really one of the great names in Nevada journalistic history, particularly in reference to sports but many other things too, including a very popular column which he's had the last several years (which he still runs since his retirement), was named managing editor of the *Journal*.

Titles, incidentally, on newspapers vary a great deal. In the *Journal*, I was editor and Ty was managing editor. On the *Gazette*, John Sanford was the editor and Joe Jackson was managing editor. And eventually those titles became changed as the years went by. When John retired, why, the managing editor became, in effect, the editor (the active head of the newsroom). But I remained with the title of editor until my retirement, and then, the managing editor title became the head of the *Journal* newsroom. [Laughs] It gets rather complicated, but really doesn't mean anything—simply titles.

Anyway, I became editor and Ty, managing editor, and later Frank Johnson, assistant managing editor. Ty and I worked

harmoniously in trying to publish a better newspaper for about the next dozen years or so, I guess. We had no acrimonious arguments whatsoever; we had differences at times, of course, but nothing ever serious at all. And so we just worked together very, very well. And, of course, when Ty became managing editor, we got another sports editor.

He was Len Crocker, who was Ty's assistant, who became sports editor, and then later, after we moved to our new building in March of 1960, Crocker went to the state desk, and we hired Gib Landell, who's an old Nevadan—or a young Nevadan—and a native of Elko; knew the state well and was an absolute sports nut. He knew almost as much sports as Ty Cobb did, I guess. And he was sports editor most of the time from that time on.

'course, the personnel shifts that we made were only one of the major changes that occurred while I was editor, and naturally, a major one was the construction of the new building for the two newspapers at 401 West Second Street. Actually, this was quite an accomplishment, too, because with publishing—the *Journal* going to press at midnight, one o'clock in the morning (about midnight) and the *Gazette* going to press about one o'clock in the afternoon, roughly [twelve] hours apart, there was always a newspaper coming out. And here we were down in the old building, and there was the new building, the press installed and everything waiting to go. So one weekend in March of 1960, when we had the longest span of time (since the *Gazette* did not publish on Sunday [and], the *Journal* did not publish on Monday then), on this night of March the sixth, or the next morning as soon as the Sunday *Journal* was out—we had then from early Sunday morning until the *Gazette* had come out on Monday, which was a pretty

short period of time—we moved the entire operation, and swung linotypes into place, and it was a frantic, frantic number of hours, but we went through with it without a hitch and changed from one building to another with stories, of course, in both papers about the change in our address, naturally, and pictures of the linotypes being placed in place and all the various machinery that was necessary to make the change. As far as I was concerned, I had been in a little corner of the *Journal* newsroom as editor and now here I was in a nice, big, spacious office [laughs], something that looked as though you were editor. It was just off the *Journal* newsroom. And there, of course, I remained until shortly after I announced my early retirement in the summer of 1972, and which became effective at the end of that year, 1972. Ty Cobb, of course, joined me in retirement last year in 1975.

My retirement, incidentally, was hurried by the naming of Warren Lerude, then editor of the *Gazette*, as executive editor of both papers. Lerude's appointment was made by Rollan Melton, the new president of Speidel Newspapers over the head of Richard Schuster, then the publisher of the *Journal* and the *Gazette*. Schuster had, of course, succeeded Melton as publisher, and under Schuster's guidance, the two newspapers enjoyed the greatest prosperity in their hundred years of history. Schuster himself was forced to resign in October of 1975.

POLITICS AND THE NEWSPAPER

I guess now maybe the best thing to do would be to return to the latter days—let's see the 1960s, I guess. It wasn't too long after I had become editor of the *Nevada State Journal*, that I heard a phrase (and this is getting back into newspaper philosophy

and newspaper—well, the general attitude in putting out a newspaper and some of the things that are heard about it), a phrase in response, I guess, to a complaint from an injured office holder. The office holder had been rapped for some decision or other, and the reporter or editor or whoever it was at the time, said, “Well, Senator,” (if it was, or governor or commissioner, or whoever it was he was talking to) “we don’t make the news, you know; we only print it.” Even back as far as that time I used to wonder a little bit about that phrase which is often used, of course, by newspaper men. “We just print the news; we don’t make it.” In fact, I originally used to say this myself in answer to someone who screamed about something that was in the paper about ’em derogatorily, until one day it occurred to me—whether or not this was entirely true. Do we just print the news, or do we, in the newspaper, really make the news? And I was forced to admit to myself that although undoubtedly the origin or whatever that news was, was certainly something that was made by someone else, the newspapers do in fact make the news, in that, as soon as a kernel of news is received, we call this official or that businessman or that lawyer, doctor, merchant, chief, or whoever, and virtually demand that he elaborate on the kernel of news which we have gotten. Nobody involved, if you can help it, gets off the hook in that particular area, until we’ve generated an extra volume or two on the background. Thus, it’s always seemed to me, since that time, that it’s not exactly whole cloth to say that the newspaper does not make the news but only prints it. ’course, that doesn’t mean, necessarily, that the news business—we’re the ones always wearing the black hat, I guess. On the contrary, we may be unearthing things that should be brought to light. But let’s not fly under the false colors, I say, of, “We don’t

make the news, Ma’am,” because we do, to a certain extent.

On another phase of the business of gathering and printing news, I’ve been asked particularly in reference to political news, “What gets in the paper and what gets left out?” ’course, there are things that slip by us; things we really don’t know that happened or are happening. But as to the things we *do* hear—what do we leave out? And, not much, really is to answer that question. In the *Nevada State Journal*, as in any other paper, we hear things that are not “hard” news, so we jot them down and comment on them in the Sunday political column. Now, the reader (any constant reader of the newspaper) has to school himself as to the difference between “hard” news and political comment—again, speaking about politics. It just has to be assumed that he knows that when a newspaper heads a column on the editorial or the op-ed page as “Nevada Political News,” or “Politics in Nevada,” or some such heading, he may well be reading rumor, or speculation, or sending up a trial balloon for somebody—or something of that nature. It just keeps the political pot boiling, keeps people (hopefully) interested in politics, and in the long run, gets ’em to the polls. This kind of comment is just kind of airing what the political writer gleans from talking to politicians of both parties, or no party, or of a splinter party—whatever.

In writing a political column, which, of course [laughing], is fun because you can let yourself go a little bit on things and usually point out as you write, that “viewers of the political scene of Nevada report that,” so-and-so is going to run. So-and-so’s done this, and so-and-so’s done that. But you do have to be very careful (even though the political writer assumes that the reader understands the purpose of a political column) that he phrases his writing to further assure that this

is merely political scuttlebutt. As I just said, I guess, the best way to do this, of course, is by using a tired but kind of a protective device for the writer in saying “informed sources,” and that sort of thing. And, of course, sometimes it is very necessary to only say “informed sources.” You may get a real good hot tip on a political situation from someone who says, “Paul, don’t let it get out that I said this,” he will say on the telephone, or wherever, “but so-and-so is thinking of running for governor.” That sort of business. I think at one time I heard fairly early on, that Paul Laxalt might not be a candidate for re-election and, of course, eventually it turned out that way. I can’t remember now whether we actually used that or whether I just heard it. ‘course, that is said against, very much against, the wishes of the person involved. For instance, if you were talking about Governor Laxalt (now Senator Laxalt, of course), the capital city reporter might ask him if he were or he weren’t, and he would say he has no comment about that at that time. (Of course, if he says he has no comment, you can be pretty sure you’re getting close to the truth [laughing].) But he will evade and so on, so you use the device of the political column to publish something and get it in there first.

But, anyway, you do have to remember that in this sort of situation, you’re saying this in a column of speculation and not in the news columns. I have just said that the reader must understand this, but of course many readers do not, and so they take it for gospel and you have to point out to them, “Well, this is a political column and we’re just simply talking about what’s going on in the political parties in the state.” If it’s said in a news story, of course, then Laxalt himself or his official spokesman has made the statement, and in the news columns it becomes fact—“Laxalt is not going to run.”

Anyway that’s just one of the facets of writing opinion in the newspaper as the political column—used not quite as much now, I don’t believe, as we used to do. We had a political column in which we usually tried to accumulate at least three or four or five of these things every week, especially if there’s an election year, such as now, and the pot begins to boil, why, you try to round up just as many little odds and ends, and they range—the political comment can range from constable right on up to U. S. Senator, of course.

It’s not too unusual that a politician would refuse point-blank to tell a certain paper a highly significant piece of news, because he wants to save it to give (the) scoop to a paper or papers who have supported him in the past. So he tries to hold back; if the *Journal* had opposed him, he will try to wait until he can give it to the *Gazette*, or to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, or to the *Elko Free Press*, or whatever it might be—give them the first crack at it. It’s repetitive, I guess a little bit, but [if] a paper which has been critical of performance can’t get a formal statement, why it can at least publish the rumor in the political column, and then it can take the credit for having run it first. And newspapers naturally like to have beats on other newspapers.

A newspaper, even with feelers all over the place, including all of Nevada’s hundred and ten thousand-odd square miles, can miss something sometimes, but not often very important things. If they do, of course, they get left out, at least temporarily, but usually, eventually come to light. There are occasions, of course, where officials hide; particularly police officials. If some high official gets caught driving his car while drunk, they will bring him to the station, and make the report and then conveniently slip it under a big blotter or somethin’ of that sort, which certainly is not the newspaper’s fault. And

then, of course, when the newspaper does eventually find out that this has happened, why it becomes ten times the news it would have been had they just merely said, “Yes, we’ve arrested Justice so-and-so, or something like that and then probably in the paper you’d have two or three paragraphs about it and that’d be all, just as though it were anyone else. Once, of course, the newspaper finds out that somebody is trying to hide something, it is, as I say, at once, many times the importance of just a routine report.

Of course, on what the newspaper might leave out, is a story or a phrase that is libelous, unless the newspaper feels that even though it may be libelous, it is so important to the public it will risk suit, and print it anyway.

I think a good example of that would be that we found that—oh, it’s a good many years ago—that our reporter, Jim Hulse learned that the county commissioners were approving, I guess what you’d call “welfare rentals.” And Jim Hulse uncovered the fact that one of the commissioners was collecting rent from the county for a semi-indigent-type person who had been dead for a year or two. And so we very carefully built this thing up and I talked with Jim and we talked with the publisher and Jim took a camera and went down to the archives, as it were, and photographed—made photocopies of the reports that the commissioners had approved, took these copies and locked them in the safe at the newspaper, and then we ran a series of articles about the activities of this commissioner. As a result of this, two commissioners (I think, it was two commissioners) One resigned and one did not run when his term was up. So, the newspaper, I think, did a very fine public service in that particular instance and, of course, these things are often to the benefit, naturally, of the public, and I don’t think the public would disagree, but the public probably

wouldn’t pay much of a great deal of attention to it either. So, sometimes it can be kind of thankless in a sense, but you know that you’re trying to help keep government clean. Once in a while, the papers get a little over-zealous in this as I think they did recently in the case of Bruno Menicucci.

Councilman Menicucci and Councilman Lauri of course (this is a very fresh thing in people’s minds) were accused— at least by inference—of using their office to further their own private business or activities, and the papers ran story after story after story, I guess, almost every day for well over a month. And the, of course, the new state ethics committee found that Mr. Menicucci was absolutely clear and that there was no indication that he had tried to further his own business through being a city councilman. And not only the state ethics committee but also the district attorney found the same thing. So, of course, the papers very dutifully and in very big print and all that sort of thing, reported that Mr. Menicucci was free of any wrong doing. But after you’ve pounded this sort of a thing into dirt, so to speak, for a long period of time, the thought is still left with the public—sort of a, “Well, what was it that Bruno Menicucci got into all that trouble about?” they’ll think, two years hence. And they won’t know that it all was wrong; all they’ll know is that Mr. Menicucci, in story after story, was being criticized by implication, would you say?—I guess, and therefore, it is damaging to his political career, and I don’t know about his business.

So I think in matters of this kind you simply have to balance, and you have to think a little bit about this philosophy and this knowledge that eventually just might—you might be damaging a man who was completely innocent, even though you may be doing all this under—well, I guess you

could say the *New York vs. Sullivan* Supreme Court finding in which you can't be sued for libel unless you can prove malice. Of course, it would be pretty hard to prove malice in many of these situations. So the newspaper editors just have to use solid judgment about handling this kind of news.

Anyway, on the matter of libelous stories, if you call a private, or even a public figure a "thief," in effect, even though you're sure you're right, you don't print it until it is "privileged." That is, that it has been stated in a court of law by witnesses or in a charge, and then, of course, it becomes "privileged" and the newspaper can quote whatever is said in the charge of, naturally, what a grand jury might say, and so on.

I think that while the press itself is currently being unduly restrained by judges who are flouting the First Amendment, freedom of the press (and I don't believe there's any question that it's a very serious problem as far as the press), that the press should remember also that it should emulate Caesar's wife, or it will incur the wrath of the very public it is striving to serve and to protect; and if that occurs, then the freedom of expression will have gone down the tube, and the right of *all* Americans to speak out, whether they're standing on a soapbox or whether that's in the media, they will irretrievably have lost that freedom.

THE BUD BAKER ADMINISTRATION

This discussion about the recent situation concerning Bruno Menicucci, and the newspaper's usefulness in bringing forth bad government, carries us back, in effect, to the time in the early '60s in the Bud Baker administration and what happened then. And I think the Bud Baker administration made the news more there than the newspapers

elaborated on it really. Certainly it did at the start, and the "kernel" that we were talking about [chuckles] of news, was more than a "kernel" as far as the Bud Baker administration was concerned, because it was virtually a *circus* down at the city hall, and it carried its own weight [laughs] in news, because of the way that that council acted. And the suspiciousness of what was going on was evident, actually, in the council's actions, so that just reporting the city council—the Bud Baker administration—doing the very *reporting* of it was indicative in itself that this was a situation that something was going to have to be done about it, I guess.

Bud Baker, in my view, was a young man with a—oh, he was a—I never viewed Bud Baker as being anyone who was really grasping for power and therefore, *money*, or something like that, and doing it by illegal means. Bud, I think, was trying to do the right thing and didn't know how, because he didn't have any background; he didn't understand government, and the other councilman (that is, then, of course, he was mayor, not a councilman); but a couple of the councilmen, I think, were probably trying to feather their own nests or really had it in the back of their mind.

Whether or not they ever *did* or accomplished it really, is immaterial, I guess, because the straight news that was printed in the paper, back during that administration, was sufficient to arouse the wrath of the public. Of course, most of the public didn't—most of the residents, I think, of Reno sniffed at it, and suspected, and didn't really do anything about it until, as we remarked, a few people just decided something had to be done about the Bud Baker administration.

So they formed a—well, they actually instituted a slate of candidates in a recall move which was unheard of, I guess, in Reno city

government at that time, because I remember we had to go back and call on lawyers, and go back into the statute books, and talk about what recall would do; give the public some information on recall. The recall attempt went so far as to have a number of prominent Reno residents volunteer to run in a recall election against the then current councilmen. As I remember, Frandsen Loomis— Bud Loomis was to be the candidate for mayor. A couple of the councilmen included Ted Withers and the neurosurgeon, Dr. Fleming—Dr. Charles Fleming. I think we might have had another one or so.

In any event, my recollection is that it did not ever come to an election. They went around first and gathered the necessary petitions, and they were declared inoperative, I guess, because—I've forgotten—some kind of technicality, as you say. Also, it wasn't too long a time when that recall effort was made until the upcoming city elections. So, once the court or whoever it was that declared the petitions insufficient (in whatever regard it may have been) —once that ruling was made, why, the recall effort died down, and then soon came the next city elections. And so at that time, of course, at the next city elections, there was almost a complete turnover.

We recalled, incidentally, that right in the midst of this, Reno [laughs] was in a pretty sad situation. And right in the midst of it all, a couple of Reno police officers were arrested for stealing from various wholesale houses. Yeah, the policeman were actually, I guess, going around in their patrol car, actually on the city's own time, and hauling off (so the charge, I guess, was proven)—were actually hauling off merchants' goods [laughs] and selling them. That added, of course, to the general appearance of deterioration of both the law-making and the law-protecting sides in the city. It was, however, resolved.

Naturally, the people were pretty up in arms, I would say, about the situation when the—when did that next city election come up?—about '62. And just to assure that there would be a change in the city administration, there were a couple of prominent local men who were talking among a small group here and a small group there, and these men were Earl Wooster, who was retired superintendent of schools, and Paul Garwood, who was the general manager of Nevada Bell. Each was very perturbed, along with numerous of their friends in their respective groups. And the way I understand it (I believe it was told to me by either Mr. Garwood or Mr. Wooster); they met each other at the corner of Second and Virginia Street and began a conversation, about the sad situation and the fact that—one thing that certainly should be done was that the mayor-council form of government should be tossed out and a city manager form of government formed, so that the city manager would carry out the wishes of the council and would, in effect, be the boss of the city, just under the council; would take the council's—a majority of the council would be, naturally, the final guiding situation which could throw out the city manager if they wished. Anyway, this city manager form of government was discussed by Mr. Wooster and Mr. Garwood standing on the corner of Second and Virginia, somewhere or thereabouts; and it came to pass that they both found out that they each had a small group that was thinking of doing something about this, and they said, "What we ought to do, since we have the same goal in mind, is combine forces." And so they did.

Let's see, where am I now? I think I'm getting a little ahead of myself, because that was not the point, at that time. It was earlier that another committee met about instituting a city manager form of government (and I

happened to be a kind of an ex-officio member of that group), and it was chairmaned by Mr. Wooster, along with Tank Smith, who was a former mayor, and there was also Bob Schouweiler, Wallie Warren—I've forgotten all the folks, but there were perhaps ten in this group. And they established a sort of speaker's bureau and appeared before many clubs in Reno, and then, put it to the state legislature to change the city charter to provide for a city manager form of government; and that passed in the previous general election, which, of course, was on (only naturally) the Reno ballots. So then that much had been established, and then the Wooster-Garwood meeting, to which I just previously referred—Earl Wooster said, or Garwood said, "We've got the city manager form of government, but we have the same councilmen, and they'll all run again and all win, even though it's a city manager form. What are we going to do about that?" That's the way the thing developed. And then they agreed that their two groups—what these groups were thinking of was, "Who can we get to run against the present councilmen," and they agreed that the two groups would join and would endeavor to get good councilmen.

So, I also happened to be sort of a—not actually a member of those committees, being in the newspaper and sort of standing aside, but very anxious, of course, as editor of the paper, that something be done. So I went to their meetings, and they met in the El Cortez. And by the time they got the meetings going, there were roughly forty or fifty Reno residents that were interested in finding candidates. And naturally that sort of meeting is not going to stay a secret or anything of that nature, so that those who were—there were a good many people who thought that these were the town bigshots, and they were gonna run the town, and they were gonna get the candidates, and then they'd tell those candidates, once they got elected, just

exactly how to operate things, which, of course [chuckles], was absolutely a false impression. But that was an impression on the part of some other Reno residents and, when they found out that this committee was meeting *they* (not the committee) branded it the "Committee of Fifty." And roughly, it was so, although I really don't think there were even fifty. My recollection now is that thirty to forty people at the outside were members of this group.

So when that word got out, came to be known, in the meantime [with] the city election coming up, Clarence Thornton announced that he would be a candidate from the northeast ward. (They've changed 'em a little now, but anyway, this was the northeast generally.) And Clarence Thornton was very much the type of man that the so-called "Committee of Fifty" wanted to get into city government. So he appeared before this committee and they said they'd give him all their support. About that same time, give or take a little bit, Hugo Quilici stated that he would run—he would be a candidate, and so that made two and they needed more.

And I had a friend, an old-friend, by the name of Roy Bankofier, who had been a candidate, I think, for the legislature just before that, and so on. And he lived in the southwest. So I suggested him and he was approached and he agreed to run.

And then we were still looking for someone from the northwest. And actually what happened was, Gwen and I were discussing at home (when I'd come home), who we could get from the northwest, and Gwen said, "How 'bout John Chism?"

I said, "Sounds like an excellent try. Wonder if John would do it. I doubt if he would." That sort of thing.

So I suggested John Chism to the committee, and the committee approached John Chism, and he agreed to run.

Then in the *Journal* newsroom one day, I was talking with Ty Cobb about the other southwest ward, and we were thinking about people that we knew and who had some expertise in various fields, and one of us said, “Well, you don’t suppose Claude Hunter would be interested? He’s an engineer, and he knows that end of the situation as far as operating the city.” So I suggested to Claude Hunter, and he agreed to run, and he was elected.

Oh, I know—Ed Spoon. I think Ed Spoon announced, and the committee backed him also. That would take [care] of all of ’em.

In the meantime, of course, many others filed, and I think in the city primary that year, there were about thirty-four candidates, something like that. There was a tremendous list. And I wrote editorials for these various candidates whom we have just mentioned. Oh, there was one other candidate that was also very acceptable and so that the committee just left that up to the voters, in effect, and so did I. And that was Bill Gravelle. Let’s see, Bill Gravelle and Roy Torvinen, both ran from the same ward. Anyway, in the series of editorials that I wrote, I recommended to the voters, all of these candidates from the various wards and said, in effect, either Roy Torvinen or Bill Gravelle were excellent; so I did not pick a specific one, but two there. But anyway, in the primary election of the thirty-four (I think there were thirty-four, it was some enormous number, I might be exaggerating there a little bit), every single one of the candidates, that I recommended, was nominated. And of course, they had an opponent, and in fact, Gravelle and Torvinen (in which we’d left it up to the voter, either one of these are good men, which I suggested) were both nominated, and I guess Gravelle won, because he was eventually the councilman. But it was very, very close.

I thought it was [laughs]—it’s kind of off the story point, except that I thought that I’d done this—I had reports even from the polls, that people had clipped out the final editorial that I’d written, naming the recommended candidates to change the city government to one for the better, that the voters actually clipped this editorial out and took it into the voting booths with them, and so I really felt myself that, “Oh boy, Leonard you’re *really* throwing your weight around here,” you know [laughs loudly].

So anyway, the time came later, incidentally, for the Nevada State Press Association which has a better newspaper contest, and one of the things was the Community Service Award. And I thought to myself, “Jiminy, you know, what I’ve done here, I can enter this Community Service Award thing and I’ll win in a walk.” So I entered it, thinking I’d really scored a coup, and it was never mentioned when they made the awards [laughs loudly]. Probably somebody who recommended a sewer bond down in Las Vegas won, from the *Review Journal* or the Sun or something [laughs]. In any event, that’s a pure aside and sort of put me back in my place. But at least we did get these people and get the city straightened around and on the train to a very much more competent and reliable city administration.

At the first meeting, of course, under the new city manager form of government, naturally, there was no mayor elected as such, but only the councilmen from the various wards. And then the councilmen, themselves, held a meeting and elected the mayor for the first time, and, of course, that’s been the situation ever since. And Hugo Quilici was unanimously elected mayor—served two terms, or almost two, I guess. With the coming of the candidacy of Paul Laxalt for governor, Hugo Quilici resigned from the council,

and, of course, since the mayor, under the new form, is always a councilman from his ward—Hugo resigned and Roy Bankofier was then elected interim mayor and then was elected mayor and served that term out. The new councilmen (I've forgotten the name of the councilman, the man who was chosen to succeed Mayor Quilici) but, in essence, that was the history of the change in Reno government from the circus of Bud Baker's administration to real city government.

We used to bemoan, in the newsroom, what we had done, because you'd go down to the city council meetings and it would be all business and everybody knew what the other fellow was talking about; and they had their differences and all that sort of thing, but they were always intelligent differences, and they were always differences only on which one councilman might think was better for the city of Reno than the other. But it was so businesslike, and so well conducted, that of course, good government (as, I guess, is usually the case) is not very good *news*. We used to have, during the Bud Baker administration, front-page stories every day about some antic or other, including the fact that one time Bud Baker decided maybe he'd resign as mayor and put himself up to be city manager [laughing].

The phone rang one morning about seven o'clock when I'd gotten home about three from the newspaper, and I'd written an editorial excoriating Bud for trying to make this jump. (At least I think that was the topic.) And he was on the phone just screaming mad, and so I vowed that I'd call him at one o'clock in the morning sometime, in his sleeping hours—but I never did [laughs].

But it was a wild and woolly time when the Bud Baker administration was in operation and the policemen—those two policemen were stealing merchandise from the very

merchants they were supposedly protecting; and it was, all in all, one of the actually darker series of years in the city of Reno when that administration was going.

[Do I want to say something about city government, in general, as a news source?] I don't know—of course, as far as news is concerned, naturally, city government is very, very—I think of great interest to anyone. I don't know, it'd be hard to say what percentage of the population—if there's a big news story on page one about city government, that certainly is where it *ought* to be. But as far as the reader is concerned, sometimes you worry about whether or not the reader gives a hoot, and if he doesn't say, "It's about what the council's doing," and move down to something about Patty Hearst and how she was threatened, for instance. It's pretty difficult to tell whether or not, as a measurement of news, should you give the public what it needs or what it wants. And perhaps you're wrong there maybe; it may well be that a good story out of a city council which, as you say, is right—our next-door neighbors practically. (I have a commissioner living two doors above, you know.) That sort of closeness is—especially in a town as small as Reno, you're so close to it that it certainly ought to be, and it certainly ought to be just from the basic fact that what the city council does, affects the city for a year five years perhaps forever, just because of one, one motion that passes.

THE RENO CONVENTION CENTER QUARREL

One of the big and longest ongoing battles, I guess you could say, over something or other in Reno (and it seemed, of course, as I guess it is in any city, that you have these things happen), was the concept of the construction of a convention hall for Reno-Sparks, or for

western Nevada, or whatever it was; first warmed up, I guess and it went into the late '50s, probably '58 or '59, somewhere in there I think. And as it did, and as we recall, they had a big go at building the convention hall out at the Washoe County fairgrounds; that included a few roadblocks, including the fact that the state owned the fairgrounds, as I recall, and Washoe County leased the fairgrounds. But eventually these things were sort of cleared away for a bond issue, to issue for construction at the fairgrounds; and there was quite a hassle over that for a considerable length of time until eventually it did go on the ballot. And I guess that would have been about 1959 or somewhere in there. However, that bond issue was defeated and the convention hall construction was thereby postponed for a time.

Then eventually, the Washoe County Fair and Recreation Board batted around various other areas including one where the Pioneer Theater-Auditorium is now located, with the idea of building an underground parking because of the rise in the ground there, and so on and so forth; it could be comparable to Union Square in San Francisco, where you'd have all underground parking and you could go up ramps and so on, into the convention hall. And then there was also of course, the "Mill Street site" between Mill Street and the river. And that gained a considerable ground for a while and then lost until eventually the Fair and Recreation Board (which, of course, at that time consisted of six members; the Reno half—there were three from Reno on it, of course, because Reno would produce the biggest revenue to pay off the bonds) hit upon buying a triangle of ground—I can't possibly remember how big—at the intersection of Kietzke Lane and South Virginia Street. And that started a real battle with the other three members of the board—one Sparks member

and two from Reno being opposed, I guess, mainly to the price. There was a great—considerable amount of testimony and so on. I guess it went to court. I can't remember. But anyway, that began in the late '50s and eventually, of course, the coliseum came to be known as the Centennial Coliseum; was located in that triangle which became known as "the golden triangle."

The convention hall wasn't actually built until 1964, '65, I guess, being open for use in the early part of 1965, starting—I think the first thing was a state basketball tournament. The bond issue for the convention hall was approved by the voters in 1961, and as I just remarked, it was '65 before the hall was finished. The bond issue was for four and a half million dollars. Eventually it wound up costing six million two hundred thousand dollars, I believe, and I suppose even that was a bargain considering what the price would be if you had to build a convention hall now.

The convention [sales] director was Will Jurgens, I think, either the first or the one who handled the convention sales at the time. And of course, at that time there was much in the paper (quotations from him and so on) about great hopes for booking for national conventions within the next few years. But the fact is, that the people really voted for the convention hall, not to hold conventions, but to be able to go themselves—the local people—and watch basketball games, and eventually of course, it happened they put in the ice afterwards. So the convention hall really was not [laughs], as I said at the time, a convention hall per se, and that wasn't the way people thought about it. They really voted for the place for their own recreation. It has turned out to be a very, very good thing for that sort of thing, but it also has turned out, it seems to me, to be a very poor place as far as national conventions are concerned, because

it was several miles out of town, which as I recall, was my stand on it at the time, and from that viewpoint it has been proven correct—that the convention hall would not go unless it were downtown where people could walk out the front door of the convention hall, so to speak, and into the hotels, casinos.

Of course, the argument grew so hot about the location of the convention hall, that eventually I was walking down the street (I think I was, or it may have been Judd Allen, the Chamber of Commerce man, I can't remember) and anyway, in a conversation with Frank Bender, Frank Bender said, "Well, why don't we build two convention halls, one downtown and one out somewhere—one out on the triangle?" This grabbed me, and I [laughs]—because I was so adamant in my feeling that conventions would never come to Reno in any great extent that far out of town, that when I went back to the office or at least after a phone call (and I've forgotten what the sequence was), I wrote an editorial saying, "Why not build two convention halls?" Immediately we got quite a response at the newspaper over this, and it was eventually agreed they would build two convention halls, the one at the triangle first and then build the convention hall downtown, which, of course, came to pass.

In the meantime, of course, this fight over the convention hall, and the cost of the property became extremely bitter, and the three Fair and Recreation Board directors, from outside of the city that is—Howard McKissick of county commissioners, and then J. C. "Specs" McKenzie from the county commissioners, and Edmond "Ed" McGoldrick, the Sparks councilman who was the representative to the Fair and Recreation Board from Sparks—joined against the three Reno members of the board, who were George Carr, John Marshall and Joe

Mastroianni, at the time. And so the three opponents to the Reno contingent's efforts to put the convention hall on the triangle (as we've just noted, McKissick, McKenzie and McGoldrick), I dubbed in an editorial, "The Three Macs." And from that time on, they were known as "The Three Macs," because they hung together and they voted and it was a standoff all the way along. And there were many stories of the reasons why the Reno contingent wanted it, some of them [laughs] pretty critical of their attitude and what they were going to get out of it. Nothing really concrete ever came [of it]; they were just mostly rumors actually.

But this three-to-three vote went on for so long that during a session (that session of the legislature—let's see, 1963 legislature), the Washoe County delegation to the legislature became completely disenchanted with the Washoe County Fair and Recreation Board over this great battle, and so they went down to the legislature, and Coe Swobe, then an assemblyman, sort of led the battle. Swobe's first idea was just to throw out the whole Fair and Recreation Board concept, and he proposed and actually introduced a bill to do this and just have it, just, then, designate the Washoe County Commissioners, as in effect, the Fair and Recreation Board. Well, of course, this caused a great scream in Reno which would collect most of the revenue for building the convention center. And so eventually, the Washoe County delegation sort of backed up a little bit and eventually introduced and passed a bill reducing the number of people on the Fair and Recreation Board from six to five, so there would not be a tie, tie, tie, tie vote on all of the things concerning the convention center. I think at the time, most of the people who lived in Reno itself were in sympathy (and I know I was) with the Three Macs; mostly, I believe, because people

believed more in the integrity of the Three Macs than they did their own councilmen. And eventually that passed and they reduced the number on the Fair and Recreation Board to five. Reno, let's see, I guess they dropped one, from Reno.

It became a little bit complicated in the timing of the situation. They had an interim board, as I remember. And then when the new law changing the Fair and Recreation Board concept came into effect—I think it was in July—the board was then comprised of one representative from Sparks, and two from the county, and two from Reno. All the trouble, really, because of that previous equal division of the members, started in 1962, shortly after the Reno members pushed through the purchase of the land—a million two hundred thousand dollars just for the purchase of the ground, at South Virginia Street and Kietzke Lane. There was a great change at that time, of course, because there were new Reno members on the board, and they were assured, of course, [of] the city election in May, because two of the Reno councilmen on the board did not run for reelection and the third, George Carr, who had been chairman of the Fair and Recreation Board, was defeated in the primary, changing completely (not completely, but substantially) the city council and certainly the Fair and Recreation Board.

One oddity of the situation during this great battle of the Three Macs versus the three Reno members on the board included a voting incident in which Carr, the board chairman, in attempting to defeat the Three Macs and get a majority opinion, voted once as a member of the board and then [laughs] voted as chairman of the board. In other words, he voted twice [laughs]. And I guess you'd count that four to two, four to three—well it'd be six members and that, in effect, made it seven members. The district attorney, Bill Raggio,

held, of course, that George Carr could not vote both as a member of the board and as chairman, and that spiked that, and that, of course, was another point that eventually resulted in the reduction to five members on the board.

And, of course, the Three Macs did, I think, favor the construction of the convention hall out at the fairgrounds. But anyway, with that election in 1963 in Reno and Sparks, a change in membership, the long battle of the Three Macs versus the Reno board members ended by the reduction of the board to five and with the disappearance from Reno politics of Carr, Marshall and Mastroianni.

Throughout all the battle of the Three Macs and the three members of the Reno council on the board, of course, the entire battle over the convention hall was tainted with rumors of all sorts; passing of the proposals for money before anyone could get contracts and so on, for construction of the buildings. And of course, these rumors all came through the newsroom as they were widespread around town. But, I certainly personally, know of no specific example, only what someone said and what was conjectured, and of course [laughs], the newspaper is always pretty skittish about rumors in the first place, because sometimes they start out with a kernel of truth and wind up as a broadside story of bad dealings and so on, and that public officers and public officials are being bribed and all that. And often those things through my experience, have been proven to be either exaggerated or even made out of whole cloth sometimes, you know. So you are not sure. But certainly, the building of the convention center (so-called convention center) —these reports of making deals with contractors, architects, I suppose furnishings—everything that went into the convention center, there was a distinct bad taste until the governments of the three

entities—well, mostly the Reno council was changed, and when it was, after the city election in '63, I guess, the battle sort of ended. But in the meantime, of course, the triangle had been purchased and so that's where they voted to build the convention center.

It was a long kind of trying time in a sense, in Reno, and it did really—people were more stirred up about that, I think, than almost anything I can remember in a governmental situation, than anything that happened in Reno during the time I was editor of the paper, which was sixteen years. I suppose you could recall others that caused such a ruckus, but I—not off the top of my head, I can't remember anything that went so long and so hard. 'course, there were so many facets, too, about the convention center, its location, as we've just mentioned. I think basically, though, the convention center has proven (the fact that it is out of town and there's plenty of parking space and so on) its worth as a great spot for the public to view events. But nobody ever thinks of it any more as a convention center. It's not thought of as a convention center. But still, the reason that they voted for it has proven to be a good reason. I don't know, I guess it still runs considerably in the red; the last I heard it was way in the red.

THE EDITORSHIP

My sixteen years as editor of the *Journal* provided the most satisfying, and stimulating, and exciting time of my entire life, as naturally it would to be the editor of a big newspaper, as far as Nevada is concerned. I am convinced that ('course, I guess I should be if I was worth anything) there is no greater calling than being a newspaper man; the post of editor, the greatest job in the newspaper profession, and especially if it's your good fortune, as the editor, to be able to write the editorials.

I combined those two jobs of course, and although it required sixty-five to seventy hours a week to do the two jobs, I felt it well worthwhile that I would write the editorials, and would not start any kind of a request to hire an editorial writer. At the present time, of course, both newspapers have editorial writers, the managing editors, and news editors and so on.

The managing editor (what would be my counterpart now) might write an editorial if the occasion hits him. Warren, for instance, does this. But as a rule the editorials are written by editorial writers; Foster Church on the *Journal* and Norman Cardoza on the *Gazette*. It always seemed to me that there's a little—naturally this has to be done in big metropolitan dailies who have whole staffs of editorial writers. They have a daily session; they have four editorial writers, or five on a big metropolitan paper; why the chief will ask, "Joe, you maybe—have you got any thoughts about Kissinger's going to South America that [you could] comment on?—and somebody else about what's happening in Detroit, if you're talking about the Detroit paper. And then they will go their separate ways and start pounding their typewriters.

But, I was too much of a small town boy, I guess, for even having an editorial writer, because I wanted to say what I wanted to say. And I didn't want to have to read an editorial and say, "Well, I don't know—that's not the way I look at this," or to go beforehand and say, "Say, Bill, my idea on this certain situation is thus and so and therefore write an editorial on it." So I was most happy to spend the extra hours until sometimes three o'clock in the morning before I would leave for home, to write an editorial. And of course, I used to get extremely fuzzy along about two o'clock in the morning, but I would go ahead and write the editorial anyway, and then I would come in

the next day and look at it and say, “Oh my God, did I say that?” you know, and then cross it out. But at least I would have the essence of it and have it ready to go to the composing room. In any event, my attitude was that if I wanted to rap somebody, I’d rap them, and if I wanted to praise them, I’d praise them. And “Leonard” would do this and as a result, of course, [laughs] downtown as it were, why, people knew that I wrote the editorials—the editor wrote the editorials. And it carried (not because of me, but because of the title), when people knew that the editor wrote the editorials in a town as small as Reno that—well, it sort of put a little more stamp of finality on it, to me, I guess—something like that; and in the eyes of the community, I think also.

In the capacity of editor, of course, he doesn’t always make his point of view stick as far as editorials are concerned. And ’course I used to get many nasty letters for advocating this or deploring that, and of course, the papers get those nasty letters now and regularly print them. It’s a peculiar thing that people sometimes say that the papers just run whatever *they* think, and yet actually the papers— Well, in reading the *Journal* just the other day there were two letters to the editor, on two different topics, in which the writers blasted the papers for what they were doing. Well, of course [laughs], it’s an oddity, because I wonder if people ever stop to think that, really, all the editor or managing editor has to do is just—or if the editorial writer handles the letters to the editor, or whoever, all he has to do is reach out and drop it into the wastebasket; no one will ever know except that one person that the letter wasn’t run, because he criticized the paper. But no, the papers don’t do that. The papers run where they say, “You’re all wrong here. You’ve done this. This is a lousy piece of writing. You’re being subjective instead of objective.” All

those criticisms of the paper itself are run in the paper. I’ve put some in that I wouldn’t have dared run about someone else, but I knew I wasn’t gonna sue me, so, people would actually say libelous things about you, which if they said about someone else in the community, you wouldn’t dare print or you’d be in a hundred-thousand dollar lawsuit. But you always leaned over backwards, actually, to publish adverse comments about the newspapers, in the newspaper. Seems to me a point that [laughs] people should recognize more, I guess, but I don’t suppose they ever will. They go right on rapping the papers about just running what the papers want.

’course in your stand you take as an editorial writer, it’s hard to say, really, how much influence you have as an editorial writer. Sometimes it’s great. Sometimes you really find out that you’ve accomplished your view, or you’ve accomplished something else.

For instance, during the great confrontation with the blacks and with the campus uprootings and so on. When was that, five years? In about ’70, I remember once there was something—I’ve forgotten, but I guess the great Detroit destruction was it, you know. The blacks in Watts, of course, and so on and so forth, built up until there was a great tremendous amount of news about this, and the first thing you know, there was some little incident concerning the blacks in Reno, and then that expanded into a rumor that was just going all through Reno, that were just bus loads, and bus loads, and bus loads of blacks were coming up out of Sacramento and they were going to come into Reno and just tear the town to pieces or something, perhaps you recall. So I wrote an editorial (checked it out, of course, and found out there was absolutely no truth in it—in all these rumors). And I just wrote an editorial saying it simply isn’t true; none of this is going to happen; there

aren't bus loads of blacks coming here. And this rumor was all started by a bus load of black people who stopped at the El Cortez Hotel and the bus was loading and someone went by and said, to himself, "I guess they're starting to come." [Laughing] And actually it was just a tour group.

But anyway the editorial spiked—soon as the *Journal* came out the next morning, with that editorial, there was no more rumors. They just, "whewsh," went up in smoke and were gone, which, of course, was a service to the community [laughs]; and which, I guess, someone realized because I believe I won first place for best editorial in Nevada that year—with that editorial, submitting that editorial. And of course, perhaps one reason that it won the prize was that it reflected the great good that newspapers do, and of course, newspapermen and journalism professors from far and wide judge these [laughing] editorials, so naturally it had a little head start there.

But, back to the original idea that editorials—I know we have discussed the impression that the series of editorials made in changing the city council, and so on and so forth. But you lose a lot of them too, and you don't say too much about that [laughing]. I recall many times I'd write an editorial saying, "This is the way such and such ought to be done," or "This is the attitude that should be taken," or whatever, and nobody ever pays any attention to it at all. So, it is a difficult thing to analyze just how much editorials are read. I think, probably, the reason that editorials do often have an effect, is because the percentage of those who do read the editorials are often community officers—that is, councilmen, commissioners, school board members, or they are community leaders. They read the editorials. They're the ones who lead Reno. And therefore, the editorials might

be read, and you might get a comparatively insignificant amount in volume of readers, but often the editorial carries a great deal more punch because those who read the editorials, are those who are in office and feeling the public pulse (or what they think is), or they are community leaders who say, "Pretty good idea they had there in that editorial in the *Gazette*," or the *Journal* or something. And it's taken from there. But also, I think more people read editorials than a great many people think read editorials, too. I mean just regular Reno residents. I think quite a number of them do, and you can tell that they do, quite often, by letters to the editor, for and against.

There are a good many things that an editor oughta remember, and one is to be constantly on guard lest his ego get the better of him. In my view, an editor should remember always that he has a newspaper at his disposal, while the person or persons that he is criticizing doesn't have a newspaper with which to fight back. Also, I find editors—that is *editorial* writers (to be more proper) seem to think they always know the answer, and it's pretty hard to get their ear. But you just must listen, because as a matter of fact, the editor knows damn little about a great many things; so he should hear out others and make inquiry, if ever in doubt as to what he's writing, from others who probably, actually know a great deal about a topic in which they are interested themselves. But it is kind of difficult, I guess, when you're an editor to remain humble [laughs], because you have right at hand a typewriter and a printing press which will tell thousands upon thousands of people the next morning just how something ought to be done, or how some public official has gummed up the works by his alleged idiocy. Often you have to go ahead and say it anyway. Point is, I think, to do it without any feeling of personal power. And if you write

with that in mind, that you think, “Boy, I’m really puttin’ the pressure on here,” then I don’t know, I think you’ve just kind of hacked then.

Another thing, I think, and this refers to the editor more than the editorial writer—you ought to treat everyone who approaches you with courtesy in your office, where ever you are, or on the telephone, whatever, because every antagonist who can be soothed, every person you can make a friend, redounds to the advantage of the newspaper, and goodness knows, newspapers need friends. Because [laughing] for one thing, just by the nature of the news, you’re forced to make so many enemies.

Well, I don’t know exactly where we are in continuity, but anyway, as far as my work was concerned in politics and so forth, as a commentator upon that scene, there’s one particular facet that I’ve often thought of over the years, and that is that I’ve found that the voters in this community, or in this state, usually know more about candidates than the so-called “experts” think they do. This has been demonstrated to me personally when two or more candidates are running for an office, and I’ve remarked to others in the newsroom or elsewhere, “You know, I’m afraid that jerk Jones is going to win because he’s so well known,” for instance, “whereas Smith is the guy certainly who ought to be elected.” That same kind of comment is true of others close to the political scene because I’ve heard it many times over the years. It’s funny, though, more often than not, the people somehow know which is the right and best candidate and, more often than not, confound the “experts” (so called) by voting for the right person. ‘course, it doesn’t always happen that way, as these things go. And perhaps the Bud Baker administration to which we’ve referred quite frequently is proof that once in a while the electorate gets fooled.

My recollection on that occasion is that the voters of Reno simply got miffed at the incumbents perhaps for one reason here and another reason there as the months and years rolled by, and so they simply voted for someone else running and it didn’t turn out to be the best situation. I’ve heard councilmen themselves say that every meeting you make an enemy or enemies, no matter which side you vote on what; and as the months go by, finally there’s a build up at the end of two or four years, or whatever the case might be, until the electorate sort of takes one of those “throw the rascals out” attitudes, no matter what. And that voter reaction they may be sorry for in a short time even, perhaps. But that’s something they can’t do anything about once they’ve committed themselves at the polls until the next election, aside from recall, which has always been proven so cumbersome as in the case we discussed before.

Another comment on editorial writing which I guess I interspersed here and there, in editorial writing, whether you’re discussing city or state politics or any other topic, I’ve always felt that the best way to approach a question that has two opposite sides in conflict is to recognize the other side, perhaps at the outset or certainly early in the editorial. That tends to convince the reader that you’re being “fair.” Then you take the, what you might call the “however” approach [laughing] and in the editorial opinion anyway, either gently or bombastically (whichever *you* think will do the job best under the particular circumstances at hand), you point out as the editorial goes on, which is the “true way.” The reason I visualize this—I’m not a psychologist, certainly [laughing], but it always has seemed to me that it is difficult for an opponent to knock your premise down if you’ve already agreed that he, too, has a

premise even if it's wrong. I guess if all this sounds a little devious, that's because it is.

There are exceptions to all rules, of course, and maybe once in a while it's just better to bat hell out of the opposition right from the start. Each case, 'course, is dependent on whatever the topic is and what the situation is at the time. The idea of batting the opponent down reminds me of a man who was my competitor in editorial writing in the same company, was the erudite former editor of the *Reno Evening Gazette*, John Sanford. He used to expand on this point. He would say, in effect "People complain you're biased, John," [he] would say. "And I would say," says Sanford, "You damn right I am—I'm biased, in editorials. That's the purpose of editorials, to be biased in favor of the side of the question that I think is the proper side."

And I've often thought there's quite a grain of truth there in that people so often misunderstand the purpose of editorials, which is to convince one way or another, and not to say both sides are right. That doesn't do any good at all; you might as well forget it. Better to let the opposition present its case in the news columns or in letters to the editor, or somethin'. [The] paper should present its side in editorial columns. As I've sort of indicated, you might do it slyly or you might do it with a meat axe, but do it. [Laughs] 'course this doesn't mean the newspaper's side is always right. But I think if the voters followed the lead of every really substantial paper in every election, that the number of demagogues and self-servers, and just plain chumps in public office would be materially reduced; and the general welfare of the people would be substantially improved.

CONCLUSION

Turning to other matters, particularly the very recent times (four years is recent times), as the time for my retirement on December 31st of 1972—as it approached, I began to wonder what I would do without my sixty-five-hour-a-week work week. I'd heard for years that a person should plan very, very studiously for retirement. Otherwise, he'd simply curl up and become useless, both to the community and to himself—to everyone around him, I guess. I did not do much in the way of this preparation—if anything. I simply resolved that I would remain in the mainstream of things going on in Reno, if I could, and that I'd do whatever was necessary to keep in the swim. So when the day came to clean out my desk and remove myself from the newsroom, I hardly even bothered to say goodbye.

My wife, Gwen, the publisher of the paper, our girl Friday in the newsroom, and a couple of people at the Sparks Nugget conspired to give me a surprise party in the latter place, the Nugget. (And incidentally, they did that so well, it really was a surprise.) But otherwise,

I was so sure I'd be visiting the newspaper at least once or twice a week, there seemed little reason to go about shaking hands and saying goodbye. And that's the way it turned out, too; for one reason or another, I'm a visitor in the newsroom once or twice a week, probably on the average.

As far as staying in circulation in Reno, as it were, that proved to be very easy. When someone called and asked me to be on this committee or board, instead of saying no to most of such requests as I had in the past, I started saying yes. And before you could recite *The Gettysburg Address*, I found myself on eight committees and boards.

The biggest and most important opportunity came only a few months after my retirement when Neil Plath, then president of the Sierra Pacific Power Company, called and said he wanted to talk to me about my being a candidate at the annual May stockholders meeting in 1973—candidate that is, as a member of the Board of Directors; I was elected. The challenge, of course, is tremendous and has been especially so in the

last two years with the battle over the great energy crisis.

I don't know, being a layman and without any background in the utility business, whether I've contributed much, yet anyway. But I'm working at it. And at any rate, it's been a marvelous experience to me to sit with people who are experts in the operation of a complex utility, and also people on the board who are knowledgeable in the money market and can analyze it in connection with, of course, Sierra Pacific Power's business.

As far as other committees in civic and state sectors, I'm a member of the executive committee of the Citizens for Private Enterprise [which] seeks to place representatives in public office who understand what private enterprise does for the community in the country. And otherwise, CPE also just—does not ask for any commitments to it; it hopes that legislators will go in and do the job properly.

I'm also a member of the Advisory Board of the Salvation Army, and then the Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood (Planned Parenthood of Northern Nevada, technically), and member-elect of the Rotary Club of Reno Board of Directors, a board on which I served about twelve, fifteen years ago, previously. Under appointment of Governor O'Callaghan, I'm on the Advisory Board of the *Nevada* magazine, and not long ago served on a board to study the possibility of the construction of a "mini-dome" in the Reno area which would have provided, of course, a roof over your head for football games and many other things. But, it really didn't get far, as far as the state. As I recall the legislature passed a joint resolution asking the governor to name the committee, and a similar one in Las Vegas. The study was completed, but then the legislature this time, in its last session, just simply passed it over. So that is in abeyance.

One of these days, I think maybe [we] might return to it, perhaps as a community endeavor rather than something through the state.

I'm a former member [laughs]—former memberships, I guess—of Young Audiences (I think that's of Nevada or Northern Nevada), and of the local zoological society which has been working for a number of years to establish a zoo in or near Reno.

And currently I'm assisting and aiding in getting financing for the regional, Region Eleven conference of Sigma Delta Chi which, of course, is a nationwide journalistic society.

During my working years I was a past president—I was president of the Nevada State Press Association. (I believe that was about 1958, I can't remember for sure.) The state press association, incidentally, is a pretty loosely knit organization and being president of it is not what you'd call a terribly busy job. [Laughs] The newspapers of the state gather once a year and meet in various cities in the state; have basically a one-day meeting; sometimes very interesting, and sometimes a little bit of a drag. But it's usually fun, of course, to meet with all the editors and a good many writers and so on—some publishers, particularly in the smaller towns because people tend to stay together. When they have the press association meeting in Las Vegas or Reno, why, people just seem to sort of scatter in the bigger communities, so it's great to have them in Ely, Tonopah. The one upcoming will be in Lovelock. Once in a while, too, I think there are some very good points brought out which can be applicable to other newspapers or all the newspapers, depending upon where the speaker may come from, of course.

I was a member of the first board of directors of the Reno Press Club when it was founded a dozen years ago or so. I guess it was the second time they had a press club.

The previous one, there [doesn't] seem to be any details on it, is lost in antiquity.

Guess I have received my share of what you might term "honors." Most of those came in my last year on the *Journal*. Perhaps the greatest of these was being named a Distinguished Nevadan at the 1972 commencement of the University of Nevada, Reno. Also honored with me at the same time, incidentally, was Byrd Sawyer, stepmother of Nevada governor Grant Sawyer, and of course, [a] prominent Nevada historian. Also in 1972, the Salvation Army named me as its 1972 "Man of the Year," or maybe that was for the previous year—whatever. And I was designated by the Scottish Rite Masonry as a Knight Commander of the Court of Honor, the next to highest honor that can be accorded to Scottish Rite Masons.

In the matter of civic clubs, I served as president of the Rotary Club of Ely, president of the Exchange Club of Elko, and long, long ago, president of the Elko 20-30 Club. As far as I can recall, that wraps up the various honors and offices—that I can recall anyway, right now.

My wife Gwen—Gwenever to be proper—was born in Reno. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. (Jack) Erikson. Mr. Erikson was the owner with George Cremer, of a wholesale feed business, Cremer-Erikson Company, later sold to Albers and Deming—Albers of course, being of the famous pancake mix business; and their warehouse, at that time, was located at Valley Road and Fourth Street. Gwen's mother—her maiden name was Armstrong and she was born in Alturas, California—Ruby Erikson.

Gwen grew up at the family home on West Second Street right near Ralston; graduated from the University of Nevada in 1937, one year after I had done so. She taught in the Ely grade school for about a year, I guess, and we

were married on May 8, 1938. I'm sure that's right—remembering anniversaries, you know. I know that it's sort of old hat to always say that your wife was a great help, but [laughs] Gwen was and has always been certainly that and even more so. I have really, seriously grave doubts that I would ever have become editor of the *Journal* had it not been for her assistance and her high brain power along the way. As a for instance, I became very seriously ill while running the *Ely Daily Times*, which I believe I recounted.

They had the great hay lift of '47 or '48. I've forgotten which winter that was. And anyway the snow, 'course, was very deep in Ely and it was quite a chore to even just get up and down the streets for a while, and I began feeling very dragged out and began having night sweats. And so I went down to the Steptoe Valley hospital to see Dr. [Noah] Smernoff. (I think probably we mentioned him previously; if not, Dr. Smernoff was, for many years, a doctor at Steptoe Valley hospital operated by Kennecott Copper and is now, of course, a prominent doctor in Reno.) Dr. Smernoff x-rayed me—well, I guess I should say I more or less kind of recovered from this during the hay lift and came spring or summer, Gwen and I went swimming out at the swimming pool at McGill, and I dived in and came up with a peculiar feeling in my mouth, and swam to the side and spewed out about a cup of blood. So I guess that was when I went to Dr. Smernoff and eventually, or I guess very soon, he took pictures of my chest which showed a peculiar infection in my chest about the size of a silver dollar. [Laughing] So, he sent me to the Veterans Hospital in Salt Lake, and while I was gone—the point that I'm getting around to is that Gwen came down and ran the paper while I was in the hospital and did a very excellent job of keeping it afloat all that time.

As far as the illness was concerned, that's almost thirty years ago, isn't it? Or twenty-eight or nine. The Veterans Hospital never found out what was wrong with me. It was in the rather early days of penicillin, so they shot me full of penicillin and this big spot on my lung just shrank and shrank and shrank, and vanished. I had one recurrence of it after I was on the *Journal*, but Dr. Fred Coddington at that time here I guess, looked at it, gave me a bronchoscopy and told me to quit smoking, which I did and never had any trouble since. Anyway, Gwen took mighty good care of that newspaper.

While we were in Ely we acquired a daughter, born February 6, 1949, I guess, Jackie Lynn. She is now department sales manager for the Emporium in downtown San Francisco. We had a son Guy, a senior at the University of Nevada, Reno. He was twenty-two.

Gwen has been active since she came to Reno—*back* to Reno I should say, since she was born here [laughing]. It certainly is *back* to Reno, but since she came back, she's been active mainly in P.E.O.—Chapter T, I think it is. Otherwise, she has sort of shunned affiliations, except those that are connected with playing bridge [laughs], and golf, to which we're both addicted, neither with any expertise I can assure you. 'course at the University she took education; got her teaching certificate and that sort of thing.

Also, during the war when I was in the service, Gwen didn't want to try to get back into teaching, so she came in and attended the secretarial school, studied shorthand and so on. [She] became quite adept at that and was secretary (I think I have said this) to Senator McCarran in Reno when he was seeking reelection and battling Vail Pittman. The office then was under McCarran and Kane in the Professional Building which is

on the southeast corner of Second and Center Streets. She took, in shorthand, speeches of Senator McCarran's that were dictated by Julian Sourwine. Julian Sourwine was then, of course, the aide to Senator McCarran; later was counsel for Senator—Internal Security, I think sub-committee on Internal Security, and Mr. Sourwine became the counsel for that committee. He also came back here and ran for Senator at one time [laughs] without any success.

And I recall Gwen's description of Sourwine when he would dictate to her a speech that would be given by Senator McCarran. And she said that Mr. Sourwine had such a facile brain, he would lean back in his chair sort of, and kind of close his eyes, Gwen said, and Gwen'd be poised there with her pencil and then Sourwine would begin to talk in what were going to be Senator McCarran's words then. It would just roll out and, although she by this time had considerable expertise in shorthand, why, it was hard to keep up with him because he would just roll the whole speech out in one vast burst, you know, and that'd be—. [Laughs] This is deviating considerably, but it's sort of interesting about Julian Sourwine, whom I knew slightly. He lived up next to where the Sanford home was on Ralston.

People, of course, are continually asking me if I'm gonna write a book. [Laughs] Seems they expect every editor to retire and write a book. And I've thought about it, but I've never run across anything that I thought was of substance that has not already been done. And I suppose you could say I'm a little skittish about having expertise to do something like that, which is a great deal different than running a newsroom, or writing editorials. And I guess I just have, maybe a fear that I couldn't do it once I started if I did find something. Besides which, it would take a

great deal, a tremendous, I know, amount of time. It would be a full-time job, and I would not be able to engage in a few things in Reno to keep me going, as I've just mentioned, that I've tried to do by serving on committees and boards and so on.

So, the only things that—or well, of course, I'm every once in a while writing a news story or something for the paper which is [laughs], you know, “falling off a log” type thing, naturally—should be, after all these years, but that's about all I've done in the way of writing.

While I was still on the paper about the nearest thing I ever came to in writing (something other than something for the newspaper) was writing a foreword to a book on northeastern Nevada by Edna Patterson and company.* That was, admittedly, great fun, because by that time I'd been away from Elko, and Mrs. Patterson called me and said that was what she wanted, was someone who could look back on Elko, who had not remained right there in the town. And of course, I started out to write this three-page double-spaced [laughs] foreword which ran into (as did the rest of the book) about ten times as long as it should've been. [Laughs] But it was interesting and they ran it that way.

I've also written sort of a history of Elko, I guess you could say, the way I remembered it from the years that I was there on the newspaper; and I did this for the *Elko Daily Free Press* on request of Chris Sheerin.

[Laughing] I think we've done an awful lot more than we need to do.

*Patterson, Goodwin, Ulph. *Nevada's Northeastern Frontier*

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A

Adamian, Paul S., 316-317
Alamo bawdy house (Reno,
Nevada), 45, 46
Albers and Deming feed,
376-377
Allen, Judd, 354
Allen, Lemuel L., 17
Ambler, Laura, 59
Anderson, Alice, 209
Armstrong, Bryn, 231
Armstrong, Elmer L., 26
Armstrong, Mary, 209
Arobio, Vic, 152
Arrascada, Manuel, 63, 64
Artemisia, 41-42
Associated Press, 143, 153,
284
Atcheson, Dave, 159

B

B. D. Billingham Junior
High School, (Reno), 30
Badt, Milton B., 100-102
Baird, Lucille, 209
Baker, Bud, 340-341, 350
Bally Distributing Company,
253
Bally Manufacturing Company,
253
Baltimore Sun, 211
Bankofier, Mrs. Roy, 69
Bankofier, Roy, 69, 346, 349
Bannigan, Calvin "Kelly," 30
Baring, Walter S., 313
Barrows, Rich, 102
Bartlett, George A., 48-49
Baruch, Bernard, 285-286
Beam, Harry, 179
Becker's saloon (Reno,
Nevada), 2
Beemer, Elwood, 139
Bender, Frank, 312, 354
Bennyhoff, Robert, 281-282,
283

B

Bentley, Helen Delich, 210-
211
Bergholtz, Dick, 143-145
Berkeley Barb, 43
Bernard, Art, 221
Bernard, Naomi, 221
Bibb, Forrest, 38, 39, 40,
64
Bible, Alan H., 297
Bigham, Clair, 237-238, 265
Bigler, Clark, 282
Bilbao, Dan, 246
Biltz, Norman H., 298-302,
312
Binion, L. B. "Benny," 136
Black Joe mine, 20
Boschfontaine (ship), 154, 155
Boulder City News, 234
Bowen, Grant, 139
Bowers Mansion (Washoe Valley,
Nevada), 1
Brafford, Hardy, 265
Broadbent, N. E., 206, 211-
212, 213
Brown, Ernest, 296-298
Buckmaster, Marie, 202
Buna, New Guinea, 155
Bundox restaurant (Reno,
Nevada), 46
Bunker, Berkeley, 298
Bureau of Land Management,
U.S., 101
Bureau of Public Roads, U.S.,
314, 315
Burge, Lee, 73-74

C

Caffery, E. P., 167
Cahlan, Albert Edmunds II
"Al," 231
Cahlan, John Forest, Jr.,
231-232
Caliente Herald (Nevada), 228
Callister, T. H. "Hy," 196-
197, 205

C

Camp Crowder, Missouri, 153
Camp Pendleton, California, 54
Campbell, Frank, 139
Capital Club (Reno, Nevada),
46
Cardoza, Norman, 361
Carlin, Nevada, 65
Carr, George, 355, 357-358
Carville, E. P., 298
Castle, Babe, 88
Castle, Douglas A., 66, 88,
96, 100
Castle, Mr., 89
Caudill, Robert F. "Doby Doc,"
134-136
Centennial Colliseum (Reno,
Nevada), 351-360
Chahalís (race horse), 6
Cherry Creek, Nevada, 214
Chism, John, 346
Chism Ice Cream Company, (Reno), 28
Church, Foster, 361
Churchill, Roy O., 26, 27-29
Churchill County (Nevada), 12
Citizens for Private
Enterprise (Reno, Nevada),
374
City of San Francisco (Southern
Pacific train), 67-72
Clough, Grace, 6
Cobb, Ty, 37, 279, 326-328, 330,
346
Coddington, Fred, 378
Coffin and Larcombe grocery
store, (Reno, Nevada), 12
College Humor, 44
College of Oregon *See*: Southern
Oregon College
Collett, George, 267, 270, 273
Collins, Dorothy, 210
Collins, Frank, 210
Collins, Jon, 210
Collins Hotel (Ely, Nevada), 210
Commerce Department, U.S., 167,
168
Commercial Hotel (Elko, Nevada),
86, 105-114, 127, 234, 239-241,
246, 256

C

Committee of Fifty (Reno,
Nevada), 345-346
Consolidated Coppermines, 178,
180, 181, 208, 222
Continental Oil Company, 174-
177
Cook, Cash, 222
Cork'n Bottle liquor stores,
238
Cowan, Charles, 138
Cremer, George, 376
Cremer-Erikson Company (Reno,
Nevada), 376
Crocker, Len, 279, 328
Crumley, Frances Smith, 110-
131
Crumley, Newton, 67, 239
Crumley, Newton, Jr., 105-107,
112, 126, 131-133, 239-240,
244, 246, 266
Crumley, Newton, Mrs., 67
Cugat, Xavier, 112-113, 244-245
Curran, Harold, 55
Curran, Virginia Wheeler, 55

D

Dan Tucker mine, 14, 15, 20
Davidson, Walter, 129
Davidson brothers (Mountain
City, Nevada), 130
Davis, Chester, 222-223
Davis, N., 78
Davis, Sammy, Jr., 245
Dean, Graham, 62, 137
Deleplane, Stanton, 320
Dennis, Tom, 203
Dennison, John, 55
Desert Wolf, 42
Deskin, Ruthe, 230
Di Cianne, Richard, 203
Dickerson, Denver, 35, 40, 59
Di Grazia family (Wells,
Nevada), 301
Divorce stories, Nevada, 48-51
Dollard, Joe, 246

D

Donrey Media, 230, 233
 Dotta, Dave, 89
 Dotta, John, 180-181
 Drake, Harrington, 246
 Dromiack, Matt, 54
The Drunkard, 87
 Duncan, Glenn, 222, 223
 Dunn, Jack, 54
 Dysart, James, 66, 89, 97

E

Eagle-Standard (Fallon, Nevada), 124
 Echo Loder school (Reno, Nevada), 8
 Editor's profession, 94-95, 278-280, 331-340, 360-371
 El Cortez Hotel (Reno, Nevada), 53
 Elko, Nevada, 20, 60-62, 66, 68, 74, 76, 77, 78, 81, 82-84, 85-114, 125-136, 147-148, 198, 199, 234-239, 267-274, 381-382
 Elko county, Nevada, 63-84, 130, 134-135
 Elko clinic, 267-276
 Elko county Fair (Nevada), 77
Elko Daily Free Press (Nevada), 40, 60, 62, 63, 67, 88, 94-95, 97, 114-117, 136, 137, 198, 382
Elko Independent (Nevada), 39, 64, 117-120, 122, 131, 226
 Elks lodge (Elko), 86-87
 Elks lodge (Reno), 56
 Elliott, Russell, 215
 Ellis, R. C. "Red," 112, 234-235, 236-240, 242-248, 256, 265, 301
 Ely, Dick, 214

E

Ely, Nevada, 8, 168-174, 178-185, 188-191, 206-223, 233-234, 377
Ely Daily Times (Nevada), 122, 168-171, 181, 192-205, 207, 208, 224, 227, 230, 233, 377, 378
Ely Record (Nevada), 169-170
 Epperson, Julian, 181, 231-232
 Erikson, J. A. "Jack," 376
 Erikson, Ruby Armstrong, 377
 Evans, Gene, 128
 Exchange Club (Elko, Nevada), 376

F

Fair and Recreation Board (Washoe County), 352-353, 355-358
 Fairview, Nevada, 12, 16
 Fallon, Nevada, 1, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18
Fallon Eagle (Nevada), 124
Fallon Standard (Nevada), 124
 Featherstone Station (Nevada), 213-214
 Fielding, Art, 213
 Fitzgerald Hotel (Reno, Nevada), 2, 25, 26
 Fleming, Charles, 342
 Fletcher, Harry "Red," 138
 Ford, Ernie "Tennessee Ernie," 112, 245, 264-265
 Ford Hook cantaloupes, 11, 18
 Fort Douglas, Utah, 149-152
 Foster, Herb, 32
 Foster, Ken, 143
 Frankovich, Lee, 240, 266
 Frantzen, Earl, 67, 115, 119
 Freeport law (Nevada), 312
 Fresno scraper, 5
 Frohlich, August, 137-138
 Frohlich, Walter, 206

G

Gallagher, Charles D., 188, 212-213
Gallagher, John, 213, 214-215
Gambling, 236, 247-262
Gaming cheaters, 236, 247-249
252-253, 257, 259-261
Gaming Commission, Nevada
state, 321
Gaming Control Board, Nevada
state, 321
Gano, Sarah, 3
Garcia, Les, 76
Garcia Saddlery (Elko,
Nevada), 76
Gardner, Paul, 121, 224-225
226
Garwood, Paul S., 343-344
General Wiegand (ship), 166
Getchell, Noble H., 15, 318
Gilmartin, Bill, 40
Godecke, Walter, 63, 64
Goldfield, Nevada, 286, 288
289
Gravelle, William H., 347
Gray, Alleta Day, 317
Gray, Leslie B., 317
Greathouse, W. George, 131
Green Lantern bawdy house
(Reno), 45, 46
Greene, Abel, 109
Greenspun, Herman "Hank,"
230-231
Grey Barney (race horse), 17
Guidici, Bill, 89

H

Hamilton, Nevada, 214
Harrison, Leslie "Spud," 58
Hare, George, 202
Harper, Charles, 89, 91, 96
Harrah's Club (Reno, Nevada),
46
Harris, Leonard H. "Len,"
307-308
Harvard Lampoon, 43

H

Harwood, Paul Atkins, 42-44
Hawes, George, 218-219
Hawthorne, Nevada, 294
Hays, Denton, 8
Heart of Gold cantaloupe,
11, 18
Heitman, Otto, 63, 64
Helmick, Frank, 141
Hendel, Charles A. "Charlie,"
296
Higginbotham, Alfred Leslie,
37, 41, 59, 60, 225, 320
Highway Department, Nevada
state, 8, 312, 314-315
Hilp, Lester J., 214
Hilp, Sol, 214
Hilton Hotel (Las Vegas), 321
Hittle, Leroy, 153
Holiday Hotel (Reno, Nevada),
246
Hollandia, New Guinea, 155-162
Hood, Arthur Jacob, 270, 273
Hood, T. K. "Tom," 268-269,
272
Hoover, Herbert, 83
Horlacher, Fred C., 216
Horlacher, Fred, Jr., 216
Hotel Last Frontier (Las Vegas,
Nevada), 135
Hovenden, O., 207
Howell, Jack, 167
Hulse, James Warren, 322-323,
337
Humboldt River (Nevada), 68
Humboldt Star (Winnemucca,
Nevada), 121, 228-229
Humphrey, Lucy King, 317
Humphrey, Marvin, 317
Hunt, S. Frank, 128-130
Hunter, Claude, 346

I

Idlewild Park (Reno, Nevada),
1

I

International Union of Mine,
Mill and Smelter Workers,
185, 186-188
Interstate 80 (highway),
312-315
Itcaina, Pete, 80-82

J

J. R. Bradley Company (Reno,
Nevada), 5
Jackson, Joseph R., 37, 68,
137, 140, 143, 158, 277-
278, 280, 285, 291, 296,
306, 328
Jaksick, Sam, 38
Jeffries, James J., 47
Jensen, Dorothy Echeverry,
202
Jeremy, Jerry, 167
Jesse E. Smith Lumber
Company (Reno, Nevada),
38, 57
Johnson, Bud, 253, 254
Johnson, Frank, 281-282, 319-
322, 324
Johnson, John "Jack," 47
Johnson, Walter Perry, 57
Johnstone, Don, 119
Jones, J. Claude "Geology,"
175
Jones, Luther, 65-66
Jones, R. R., 87
Joplin, Missouri, 154
Journalism education, 35-45
Jurgens, Will, 353
Justi, William "Rags," 138

K

Kearney, William, 5, 20
Kellogg, Mr., 49
Kendall, Glen, 160

K

Kennecott Copper Corporation,
177-180, 183-184, 203, 311,
378
Kimberly, Nevada, 178, 180
Klamath Falls, Oregon, 38
Klamath Moulding Company
(Klamath Falls, Oregon),
38

L

Lake Tahoe Area Council, 277
Lamprey, June, 199, 202
Landell, Gib, 329
Lane, Abbe, 244
Larsh, Walter, 179
Las Vegas, Nevada, 134-135
Las Vegas Review Journal
(Nevada), 230-231
Last Frontier (Las Vegas,
Nevada), 135-136
Lauri, Nick, 338
Laxalt, Paul D., 321
Leonard, Daisy, 4
Leonard, Guy, 41, 379
Leonard, Guy L., 4
Leonard, Gwenevere Erikson,
39, 60, 69, 87, 146, 154,
194, 207, 217, 275-276,
277, 283, 346, 372, 376-
380
Leonard, Herbert, 4
Leonard, Jackie Lynn, 235
Leonard, Leslie, 32
Leonard, Leslie Levi, 1, 2, 3,
5, 6, 7, 11-18, 20, 21, 288
Leonard, Lloyd, 5, 38, 40, 141
Leonard, Manch, 4
Leonard, Rachel Moore, 7, 20
Leonard, Waldo, 7, 8, 32, 123
Leonard's Crossing (Tacoma,
Washington), 3
Lerude, Warren, 330, 361
Levy-Zentner Company, 27-28
Lewis, Ted, 106-107

L

Leyte, Philippines, 144, 155-162
Life, 254-256
"Lighter Touch", 319-320
Little Waldorf (Reno, Nevada), 58
Loder, Echo, 29, 30-31, 33
Long, Arthur, 323-324, 326-327
Loomis, E. Frandsen "Bud," 341
Los Angeles, California, 8
Lovelock Review-Miner (Nevada), 121
Luce, Elwood, 27

M

Macauley, Thomas W., 313
McCarran, Patrick A., 103, 290, 292-298, 379-380
McCloskey, John R. "Jack," 120
McCulloch, Frank, 141-142
McDonald, Joseph F., 295
McDonald, Russell W., 6, 275, 277
McGee, Virgil, 246
McGill, Nevada, 177, 180, 182-183, 185, 189-190, 193
McGoldrick, Edmond "Ed," 355-358
Mack, Effie Mona, 34
McKenzie, Joseph C. "Specs," 355-358
McKissick, Howard F., 355-358
McLaughlin, Tom, 212
MacNamara, Joe, 102-103
MacNamara, Mae, 103-104
Maffi, Benny, 307
Maine, 3
Malone, George W. "Molly," 302
Manzanita Hall (University of Nevada, Reno), 40
Mapes Hotel (Reno, Nevada), 265
Marcotte, Ruth, 220-221
Marine Corps, U.S., 54
Marshall, John, 355, 358

M

Marx, Chico, 108
Mary S. Doten Elementary School, 26, 29
Mastroianni, Joe, 355, 358
Mayer, Tom, 41
Mayer Hotel (Elko, Nevada), 86, 112, 237, 239
Mechling, Thomas B., 301-302
Medford, Oregon, 87, 101
Melarky, Alice, 279
Melton, Rollan, 124, 330
Menicucci, Bruno, 338
Menke, Blaine, 99
Menke, Mark, 85, 98-100
Menke family (Reno, Nevada), 99
Meri, Camile, 8
Midgely, Lois, 40
Millard, Nan, 209
Miller, "Dragline," 219-220
Miller, John, 121
Miller, Orison, 30
Miller, Robert E. "Bob," 59
Miller family (Reno, Nevada), 53
Mills Novelty Company, 253
Mineral County Independent (Hawthorne, Nevada), 120
Miss Thatcher (race horse), 290
Mizpah Hotel (Reno, Nevada), 46, 52
Mizpah Hotel (Tonopah, Nevada), 237
Moffat, William H., 239
Mohawk bawdy house (Reno, Nevada), 45, 46
Moler, Murray, 70
Monroe, Mary Johnstone, 119
Monroe, Warren L. "Snowy," 118-120, 226-227
Moore, Owen, 295
Moren, Les, 69, 147, 270, 271, 273
Mormon crickets, 73
Mountain City, Nevada, 128-130

M

Mountain City Copper Company
(Nevada), 78, 130
Mueller, John V., 298-302,
312
Murrow, Mr., 314
Murtaugh Sisters, 111
Music Corporation of
America, 110
Muth, Edmund, 29
Muth, Margaret Fuller, 29
Myles, Jack, 122-124, 181

N

National Maritime Commission,
U.S., 210
Naval Air Station (Fallon,
Nevada), 20
Neosho, Missouri, 154
Nevada Adventure, 323
Nevada Citizens Committee,
123
Nevada Hotel (Ely), 206,
210, 211
Nevada State Labor News, 59
Nevada (magazine), 374
Nevada Mines Division, 189
Nevada State Journal (Reno),
62, 275, 277-279, 281, 291,
309, 318-339, 360-371
Nevada State Press Association,
120, 121, 224, 225-226, 348,
375
New Guinea, 154
Newlands Reclamation Project
(Nevada), 7, 11, 288
Nixon, George S., 287-288
Noble, Ray, 108
Nores, Edgar L. "Judge,"
227-228
Northside Junior High School
(Reno, Nevada), 30

O

O'Callaghan, Donal N. "Mike,"
321, 374
Old River (Fallon, Nevada),
7
Old River school (Fallon,
Nevada), 9, 10
Overstreet, Captain, 35

P

Parent, Don, 88
Patterson, Edna, 381
Pearl Harbor, 147-148
Pennington, William "Peekaboo,"
177
Peterson, Harold M., 180
Phillips, Clayton, 35, 138
Pickford, Mary, 295
Pincolini family (Reno,
Nevada), 52-53
Pincolini, Joe, 52
Pincolini, Melba, 52
Pine, Edward L., 305
Pioche Record (Nevada), 227
Pioneer Theater-Auditorium
(Reno, Nevada), 352
Pittman, Ida Louise Brewington
"Liz," 192, 200, 208, 233
Pittman, Key, 82, 298
Pittman, Vail, 168, 169, 192,
200, 216, 233
Planned Parenthood of Northern
Nevada, 374
Plath, Neil, 373
Powers, Amy Parker, 29
Prince, Rawson "Ross," 212
Prouty, Estelle, 29
Purple Cow (Williams College)
44

Q

Questa, Eddie, 266
Quilici, Hugo M., 346, 349

Q

Quilici brothers (Wells,
Nevada), 80-81
Quinn, Walter, 208

R

Ragon, Alice, 263
Ragon, Don, 263
Raley's supermarket (Reno,
Nevada), 6
Ranchinn Hotel (Elko,
Nevada), 246, 266, 267
Rarick, Galen, 200-201
Read, Effie, 209
Redd, W. S. "Si," 253
Reed, Jake, 270
Reese, Joe, 138
Regents, University of
Nevada, Reno, 316
Reno, Nevada, 1-3, 5-7, 8, 11,
14, 17, 20, 21-58, 59, 68,
76, 88, 99, 113, 137-143,
146, 167, 191-192, 277, 299,
302-308, 312-315, 340-350,
351-360, 364, 374, 376-377
Reno City Council, 138, 306-
308, 340-350
Reno Convention Center. *See*
Centennial Colliseum
Reno Evening Gazette (Reno,
Nevada), 21, 25, 62, 137-
148, 167, 181, 275, 277-
282, 284, 291, 294, 296,
302-308, 319, 321, 329,
330, 361, 370
Reno High School (Reno,
Nevada), 7, 8, 31, 32
Reno Junior High School (Reno,
Nevada), 29, 30
Reno Meat Company, 26
Reno Newspapers, Inc., 275
Reno Press Club (Nevada), 376
Reporter's profession, 62, 85,
90-94, 139-140
Republican party, 317-318

R

Richardson, Frank, 315-316
Richfield Oil Company, 175-
177
Rick's Resort (Reno, Nevada),
47
Riepetown, Nevada, 180-182
Right to Work law (Nevada),
311-312
Riordon, Lefty, 265
Ririe, William B., 207
Riverside Hotel (Reno, Nevada),
49, 191, 291
Roantree, Robert P., 273
Robbins, John E. "Jack," 81,
82, 104-105
Roberts, Edwin E., 57
Roberts, Gerald A., 40
Rodeo Cowboys Association of
America Rodeos, 76
Roecker, Delma Pincolini, 52
Roseville, California, 6, 7
Ross, Ruth Briggs (Mrs.
Randall), 33
Ross, Ted, 206
Rotary Club (Ely, Nevada), 376
Rotary Club (Reno, Nevada), 374
Rotholtz, Adelyn, 41
Russell, Charles H., 169, 216,
233, 296
Ruth, Nevada, 177, 178, 180,
185, 190, 193

S

Sacramento Bee (Sacramento,
California), 5, 38, 282
Sagebrush (University of
Nevada, Reno), 38-41
Salinas, California, 76,
237-238
Salisbury, Roy "Coke," 8
Salt Wells, Nevada, 13
Salvation Army (Reno, Nevada),
374, 376
Sand Springs, Nevada, 13, 14

S

Sanford, John, 37, 68, 95,
 140-143, 182, 275, 277-278,
 280, 294, 295, 296, 328, 370
 Sawyer, Byrd W., 376
 Sawyer, Grant, 293, 376
 Schooley, Bill, 26
 Schooley, Roy, 26
 Schouweiler, Robert, 344
 Schuster, Richard, 330
 Scottish Rite Masons, 376
 Scripps, Edward Willis, 284
 Scripps, E. W. III "Ted," 283
 Scripps-Howard newspapers, 283,
 284
 Scrugham, James G., Jr., 30
 Seacrist, Mrs. Wayne, 209
 Secor, Charles E., 270, 273
 Sheerin, Chris, 60, 62, 67-69,
 97, 115, 117, 130, 133, 136,
 137, 382
 Shell Oil Company, 175
 Sielaff, Alwine, 34
 Sierra Pacific Power Company,
 373
 Sigma Delta Chi journalism
 fraternity, 375
 Signal Corps, U.S. Army, 153
 Silver Dollar Club (Elko,
 Nevada), 81
 Sirkegian, Paul L., 222
 Skeen, Sergeant, 35
 Small Newspapers Press
 Association, 121, 224
 Small Newspapers Publishers
 Association of Nevada. *See*
 Small Newspapers Press
 Association
 Smernoff, Noah, 207, 377-378
 Smith, Claude, 124-125
 Smith, Francis R. "Tank," 344
 Smith, J. Ralph, 79
 Smith, Marge (Mrs. Thomas A.),
 208
 Smith, Thomas A., 179
 Sorenson, "Doc," 242, 244
 Sourwine, Julian G., 292-293,
 379-380

S

Southern Oregon College
 (Ashland), 101
 Southern Pacific Railroad,
 70-72
 Southworth, George A. "Pop,"
 138
 Sparks, Nevada, 32
 Speidel Newspapers, Inc., 275,
 279, 330
 Spina, Eddie, 56
 Spina, Frank, 56
 Spina, Rocco, 56
 Spoon, Ed, 347
 Springer, Charles E., 317
 Stag Inn (Reno, Nevada), 22,
 25, 26
 Staley, Ray F., 15
 Standard Oil Company, 174-177
 Steele, Jon, 111
 Steele, Sandra, 111
 Steninger, E. M., 60-62, 115,
 117, 243
 Steninger, Eber, 62, 115
 Steninger, Melvin, 115, 119,
 243
 Steptoe Valley Hospital (East
 Ely, Nevada), 206, 377-378
 Stewart, Harry E., 137-138
 Stitser, Avery Davenport, 121,
 228-229
 Stitser, Rollin C., 118, 120-
 121, 228-229
 Stockade (Reno, Nevada). *See*
 Alamo
 Stockmen's Hotel (Elko, Nevada),
 86, 112, 235-266, 267, 301
 Stout, Charles H., 279-281, 314
 Stout, Minard W., 316
 Stratton, Mr., 246
 Streng, Ed., 34
 Sullivan, Frank, 325-327
 Swallow, George, 171
 Swobe, Coe, 356

T

Tacoma, Washington, 3, 18-19
Taft-Hartley labor act, 191
Tapscott, C. B., 66, 87, 88,
100
Tax Commission, Nevada state,
247
Taylor, Terrill, 138
Taylor Grazing Act (1934)
U.S., 63
Thornton, Clarence J., 345
Tokyo, Japan, 161-162, 163-
165
Tonopah, Nevada, 8
Torvinen, Roy Lee, 347
Toussaint, Wallie, 305-306
Treasure Hill, Nevada, 214
Trego, Peggy Frames, 326, 327
Trego, Robert, 325-327
Triplett, Bud, 226
Triplett, Charlie, 226-227
Truckee river (Nevada-
California), 303-307
Tuck, W. L., 217
Tucker, Sophie, 108
20-30 Club (Elko, Nevada), 376

U

United Press International, 59,
70, 115, 143, 199, 281-284
United Steelworkers of America,
186-187
University of Nevada (Reno,
Nevada), 36-37, 315-317,
320, 322, 376

V

Vanderbilt, Cornelius, Jr., 49
Vannoy, Ralph, 12, 18
Variety, 109
Vaughn, Barbara, 267
Vaughn, E. Otis, 32
Vencill, True, 15

V

Verdi, Nevada, 4

W

Waldorf Club (Reno, Nevada),
325
Walters, Frank E. "Pete,"
25, 105, 234-235
Walther, Jack, 30
Warren, Wallace D. "Wallie,"
158, 344
Washoe County Fair and
Recreation Board, 352-360
Weed Heights, Nevada, 311
Wells, Nevada, 65, 301
Wells Progress (Wells, Nevada),
226
West End school (Fallon,
Nevada), 9-10
White, Hugh, 223
White, Mr., 195-197, 205
White Pine Lang Syne, 209
Whiteman, Paul, 109-110
Whiting, Margaret, 245, 265
Whiting, Richard, 265
Wilcox, Walter, 168, 169-171,
176
Will Mastin Trio, 245
Williams, Bud (dentist), 88
Willows, The (nightclub)
(Reno, Nevada), 47
Wilson, Joe, 85, 100
Wilson, Orville, 87, 100-102,
133, 234-235, 248
Wilson, Orville, Mrs., 69
Wilson, Stewart, 102
Wilson, Thomas A., 42
Wingfield, George, 285-292,
298
Winnemucca, Nevada, 287, 289
Winners Inn (Winnemucca,
Nevada), 266
Withers, T. L. "Ted," 342
Wonder, Nevada, 12, 16

W

Wood-Curtis Company (Reno,
Nevada, 12
Woollcott, Alexander, 49
Wooster, Earl, 343-344
World War I, 19
Wright, William B., 173

Y

Yancey Company (Reno,
Nevada), 39
Yokohama, Japan, 162-163
Young, C. Clifton, 49
Young Audiences of Northern
Nevada, 374

Z

ZCMI (department store)
(Salt Lake City, Utah), 242
Zenoff, M. M. "Morry," 226, 234

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